

THE VILLAINESS TURNS THE HOURGLASS NOVEL (HTTPS://READLIGHTNOVELS.NET/THE-VILLAINESS-TURNS-THE-HOURGLASS.HTML)

Chapter 131 (<https://readlightnovels.net/the-villainess-turns-the-hourglass/chapter-131.html>)

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Chapter 131. Revenge (II), Part III

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

“Well, maybe you’re not all better yet, so you’d better rest for a while. Make sure you eat well and feel at home. You can’t ignore the trauma.”

“Ah...!”

Aria’s face turned pale as if the doctor’s words reminded her of the time of the incident. Having to live in a mask for a long time, she looked quite plausible.

Jessie, who was waiting by her side, hurriedly handed her the honeyed water. Jessie was black under her eyes as if she had not slept and worried. Aria bit her lips and asked again, recognizing that she was the only one who would remain unchanged from beginning to end.

“Well, what happened to Berry?”

“I’ve called the guards, and I’ve sent people to go after her, so she’ll get caught in no time. Don’t worry.”

Aria's expression was dark even in the Count's affirmative answer.

"... Is it true that she did it? The... poison."

"I'll have to investigate more to say for certain, but for now I have no choice but to see it."

The incredible sight also dimmed the complexion of those watching her. They were grieved over the fact that the maid who was attending at her side had done such a terrible thing to her master.

'I hope she wouldn't be caught for a long time.'

Aria was so happy in this situation that she wanted to dance. 'The longer she runs away, the more compassion she will have for herself. If there is any rumor that this is related to Mielle, that will be a bonus.'

"Mielle, are you all right?"

Aria spoke to Mielle, who was secretly checking her condition in the corner after she quietly opened the door and came in, and Mielle nodded in surprise. Yeah, it was like a criminal.

"I-I'm okay..."

"It's a good thing. I wish it was only for me. If you're going through this terrible thing, I'm sure I can't stand it."

The remark was sincere. If they were harmed together, wouldn't she be able to pass over the responsibility on to her? Of course, it was what she ordered, so she wouldn't do the stupid thing to drink poison on her own.

‘Oh, come to think of it, it was the opposite in the past.’

It was Mielle who had pretended to drink poison while she had abetted the crime. It was Aria who had been driven to the culprit. Of course, it was true that she had said it would be better to put poison in Berry’s temptation, but the first indicator of the case was Mielle, like now. That had ended Aria’s life.

Foolish Mielle, it would have been better to pretend to drink poison like then. You didn’t know that the bullied patient was followed by pity and sympathy.

“... You’ll be feeling better soon.”

‘Didn’t you want me to die?’

Mielle’s smile, which did not seem to be pleasant as usual, made Aria smile.

“Thank you very much, Mielle. I’m happy that you’re trying to cheer me up.”

Aria could see Mielle’s eyes shaking at the look of weakness but never likely to die. She seemed to want to run away from this place right now.

“... But I’m relieved to see you wake up like this. I think I’m disturbing you, so I’ll go out.”

And she said she was going to run away. It was quite hard to see the person, who she had been trying to kill, smiling alive. Aria could read her feelings from the way she hurried out of the room without looking back.

“I’ll go, then. Call me whenever you need me.”

“Yes, you’d better take a good rest. I’m going out, too.”

When Mielle suggested that she would go out, the others left, saying, "You'd better take a good rest." The last ones who left were Annie and Jessie. Annie fell on Aria's bed and burst into sorrowful tears as if her startled heart still hadn't calmed down.

"I... I thought you were going to die...!"

Now she was crying, but in the past, if she said that she was also on the side of killing herself, who would believe it? In a complicated mood, Aria's hand, sweeping Annie's hair was very rough.

"Jessie, with this, Annie's eyes would swell out. Can you bring her a cold towel? And the tea I'm going to drink."

Now that there were no more maids to serve, the share was naturally given to Jessie and Annie. In particular, Jessie left the room quietly answering whether she thought it was her job to do.

"How is the atmosphere outside?"

Annie, who understood Aria's intentions at once, stopped crying and answered, "Don't even talk. The mansion went up and down. And you had a visitor that day, right? He's the one who had many connections in the noble society, so the rumor seems to have already spread."

"Really? What kind of rumor?"

"The maid tried to poison you..."

There seemed to be no other rumor except the fact that nothing else was going on.

‘Isn’t it time yet?’

It had only been two days since the incident, so it wouldn’t be easy to talk about anything but the fact. Just the fact that she had been nearly poisoned gave her a sweet taste.

“Anyway, the servants and maids of the mansion are all angry! There was a servant who threatened to tear her up and kill her if she comes back”

“Yes, I see.”

That alone was a good harvest. But the seed that had been sown had sprouted and grown as far as the sweet fruit was borne. Usually, rumors from the outside were supposed to spread in from the inside.

“Annie, you’ve got something to do.”

“What is it?”

“Yes. I might get a little busy.”

Aria put on a smile. It was quite unexpected to see her who had a headache until now. Annie felt uneasy and swallowed her saliva.

“Why don’t you correct the rumor? I’m sure many people are also curious about the state of the mansion.”

“Ah...”

That alone allowed Annie to notice what Aria wanted. Annie nodded vigorously.

"Don't, don't worry, miss! I'm an expert on that."

"Yes, I'll just trust you, Annie. Oh, by the way, I'm sure Baron Burboom will be curious about that, who's on good terms with you, so please let him know."

Baron Burboom's favoritism and loyalty toward her was palpable. He must have been much more gossiping than Annie. Now that the plate was laid, all that was left was to wait.

As she threw a card of Annie and locked herself in the room, saying, "It's impossible to get a visitor," there was an unexpected visitor who she couldn't refuse. It was Sarah and Vincent.

"Aria...!"

"Sarah."

She burst into tears as soon as she saw Aria's face, which had become very emaciated. It was because she didn't eat properly to look more plausible. Behind her, Marquis Vincent greeted her with a regretful face.

"You must be busy, how can you...?"

Even with Aria's question, Sarah could not easily answer, so the Marquis was the one who answered instead.

"I was told that you had a big incident, so we couldn't make an appointment, and we came here."

The Marquis had a painful face, saying she looked very sick. Besides, when she faced Sarah as if she had got the incident, she couldn't say anything. She just had to look at it quietly together.

"I heard the culprit hasn't been caught yet."

"I think she ran away right after I fell down."

"I sent people to catch her as soon as possible."

Aria nodded silently with her eyes wide open when he explained that there were people who had been trained to find people. At the very least, one of the maids fled, and she thought it was not necessary to hire such men, but she listened to him because he gave her an explanation quite seriously.

Then Sarah, who suddenly stopped crying, said while holding Aria's hand. "Don't worry, Aria. I'm on your side."

"Sarah?"

"And the Marquis, too, right?"

"That's right."

The Marquis nodded in response to Sarah's question.

'Are they really going to be on my side even though I act like in the rumors. The wicked woman who people know, unlike now?'

Maybe it would be if it was Sarah. She thought Sarah would believe there was a reason for being such a wicked woman even if she did something evil. It was an infinite amount of trust that she had never received even from her mother.

“... Thank you.”

So when she answered with unwanted tears, Sarah hugged Aria and began to cry again. In the end, Sarah stopped crying only after her eyes were swollen, and she couldn't go back like that, so she borrowed a hat from Aria and hid her eyes and returned.

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Chapter 132. Revenge (II), Part IV

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

Perhaps Sarah's offer to be on her side was not just empty words, but she officially began to express her opinion, saying, 'Aria is not a wicked girl but a good girl,' and Marquis Vincent also sided with her, saying, 'I hope the poor Lady Roscent's case will be resolved quickly.'

The support of those with power exerted far greater effect than the groundless rumors that had been passed down from a person to another. Just a few days ago, because she had attended Sarah's engagement ceremony, many people liked and were interested in Aria. Therefore, people who had seen her in person and had experienced her looks and characteristics began to express their opinions, one by one, rather than rumors from unknown sources.

Annie's contribution also played a big role. Thanks to her spreading rumors around, Aria had become a poor girl, who had truly suffered unhappiness without any wrongdoing.

The servants of the mansion chatted, and the Count was angry at the shame of the family, and the Countess was in tears. And after days and days of sleepless nights of ever-changing rumors, Mielle was again given a letter from the princess.

* * *

In the midst of such a tumultuous winter, Berry was still not caught. They searched her family, relatives, and acquaintances, but they couldn't find her.

It was questionable why such a small girl in her late teens could not be found. They also took the issue seriously and tightened security for entering and leaving the capital city. Doubts and suspicions grew bigger, and in time Aria used Annie to pour a dash of oil into the fire.

'Unless there is someone behind her, it will be impossible to spend this cold winter alone!'

It was indeed plausible and true that rumors spread that Berry must have been receiving help from someone, and several times the guards visited the mansion to inspect the servants and maids.

"I am not! I love Lady Aria so much!"

"Not me either! How much help could a servant give to a fugitive in the first place?"

They truly complained of their injustice, and it was true that the same servants' help would not last very long, so the investigation for the servants and maids was soon terminated. Of the successive claims, it was also due to the most credible one.

"I'm sure Emma's the only one at home who hates Aria. Emma felt sorry for Aria, whose origin was a commoner. She's always been so mean and said that Lady Aria was frivolous."

It was Annie's testimony. She had shared the moment when Aria was poisoned, and her experience working under Emma made her remarks highly reliable. Of course, it wasn't just her testimony. Confidence grew even more as other servants and maids said they had felt the same way. Also, Aria's tearful experiences played a part.

"Emma? I don't know... Emma... I guess she thought I'm defaming Mielle's reputation. Of course, she is right. As you can see, my origin is not good... and I'm still a little inexperienced to stand side by side with Mielle."

Aria, answering the question, was greeted with a glare of guardians. Every now and then she would shed a tear of lamentation and sorrow. She looked as if she were an angel from heaven, wearing a light pink outer garment that looked as soft as snow on top of a pure white indoor dress with no pattern.

Her blinking light-green eyes and the glare of her glimmering blonde hair, whenever she talked, the guards would blush.

"Oh, have you spoken to Mielle?"

"Oh, no. Lady Mielle seems to be quite shocked, and we haven't seen her yet."

"I see... She's a weak girl. But since Mielle is closest to Emma, I don't know if she knows anything."

So, Aria, who had been answering their questions for a while, saw the cold tea and called Jessie and Annie.

"Jessie, and Annie. The knights' tea is already cold. Please bring some more snacks and fruit."

"Oh, no. We have to return in a minute."

Aria smiled softly and shook her head, holding the hand of the knight who was flustered and waving.

"It's still cold, but it's sinful as you're suffering because of me. I hope you take a little break, so please don't refuse."

"... Well, well, if that's the case, we'd excuse you."

No one could resist her determined temptation. When they saw Aria, they could not hide their anger at the fact that such a beautiful and pure lady had suffered such a terrible thing, and the investigation was becoming more and more for self-interest. Therefore, there was no difficulty in driving Emma to the back of the incident.

"Do you really think Emma is the culprit?"

Annie asked as she arranged the table. The tulips that had been changed and brought back looked as fresh as if they had just been re-watered.

Aria, who glanced at it and then turned to the book, replied. "I think she's related."

"I think so, too! I came to you on Emma's order, too."

When Annie realized that she had made a mistake, she began to excuse Aria for a moment.

“Well, that’s true, but we just fell apart! I quickly realized that it was wrong! I have no relationship with them now. I’m here only for Miss Aria!”

Annie blushed when Aria smiled with a laugh at the sight of her being bothered for nothing.

“Oh, by the way, if Berry gets caught, the real culprit will be revealed, right? Emma’s under surveillance by the guards, so it’s hard to escape.”

“Yes, I hope we find the real culprit soon.”

‘The real culprit behind Emma.’ But perhaps it was hard to tell that she was the real culprit. If she had not been crazy, Mielle couldn’t have given orders to Berry herself, so Berry couldn’t testify either.

‘Even so, if Emma was proven to be the culprit, Mielle won’t be safe either. Isn’t she following her like she was her mother? There will be very little doubt that Mielle is behind everything. It would be so frustrating to see how disheartening it would be to not have killed the one who she had tried to kill and to have her ally’s reputation get cut down.

As she had delayed enough time, she had got what she wanted to have. Now all that remained was to catch Berry. Aria, who had finished reading the book recommended by Asher, said to Annie, putting it down on the table,

“But where do you get tulips this winter? You don’t have to go like this every day because it’s not my favorite flower.”

“Tulips? Me? It’s not a gift you received, is it?”

“What? I don’t remember receiving such a gift...”

“Really? Then who the hell brought it? Jessie? It has changed so many times.”

Annie’s addition to the fact that she didn’t know who changed tulips that didn’t wither so often allowed her to guess who had brought the flowers.

‘... Asher?’

She couldn’t think of anyone else. He had the ability to move from one place to another, so he could have come to the mansion if he wanted to.

When did he come here? He said there was a price, but if he used his ability often, would he be okay?

She was disappointed because he didn’t show up even though there was a rumor that she was sick due to something terrible, but her regretful heart melted like snow when she knew it was not.

‘I hope he would see my face. What’s so urgent that he left the flowers behind? Since no one saw him, did he come at dawn?’ She was thinking about not sleeping for a while, but she touched the petals because she felt sorry. After a while, she suddenly got up after hearing some harsh footsteps.

‘Who’s going around the mansion so frivolously? The servants and maids are always attentive to every action, not to mention the Count, Countess, and Mielle. Moreover, the only room on the third floor was Aria’s, so the sound of footsteps must be someone who has something to do with her, so why is he moving carelessly?’


When the footsteps stopped in front of her room, Annie and Aria hardened themselves with nervous faces. Moreover, it was not long after something bad had happened, so it added to the tension. But even though it had been long since it stopped, no sound had

been heard, and in the end, they were forced to confirm who it was.

“... Who is it?”

No one outside the door replied to Annie’s trembling voice. All she could hear was the sound of feet moving away and getting closer again as if he were hesitating. ‘Who the hell is that? He wouldn’t be an outsider to see such a fuss.’

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Chapter 133. Revenge (II), Part V

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

Annie also asked Aria carefully if she thought so. “Shall I take a look?”

Aria nodded and Annie went out to check. Annie shrieked at the unexpected visitor.

“Mr. Cain...”

‘Cain?’ Aria was surprised. ‘Why? He still has a little time to come back.’ The face that was looking through the half-open door was really Cain. Now a full-grown man, he was staring at Aria with a grimace.

Cain, who had been staring at Aria for a long time, slowly opened his mouth as she stood firm without saying anything at the appearance of Cain, who she had never thought of.

“... I heard you were in big trouble.”

Aria nodded slowly to his question. With that action, the fluffy blanket on her shoulders was knocked down to the floor. Cain looked as if he was distressed and bit his lower lip, looking at a lean body because she couldn't eat properly for a long time.

As Aria stared at him in a strange and mysterious way, Cain, who had been trying to say something several times, soon breathed a deep sigh and turned away.

"... What the hell?"

At Aria's question, Annie couldn't give an answer, cocking her head.

* * *

Because of Cain, who returned early without even telling them, Aria went down to the dining room after a long time. They told her that she didn't have to come down if it was hard for her to do so, but she wondered why he came back so quickly.

As if it were all the same, Mielle, who had been locked up in her room for some time, and the Count, who had been out in the suburbs because the warehouse business had been in full swing, also took a step forward to come. Cain, however, did not give a specific reason why he returned earlier than scheduled.

"I've prepared a new outfit to attend the graduation ceremony, and I feel sorry."

"We'll get together and the ceremony will be done after the speech. It's nothing."

Cain answered with dismay when the Countess said sorry. He had no interest in the Countess, neither in the past nor in the future. It was nothing more or less than a woman his father remarried.

He would soon take over the family after taking lessons in succession, and the tainted family honor would have to be repaid by his actions.

“Mielle, your eyes look swollen, but you haven’t been hit by anything, have you?”

“... No, brother.”

‘Why does Mielle look sicker when she isn’t the one who almost got poisoned?’ Her swollen eyes and anxious moods were beyond her imagination. She didn’t have to be nervous unless she was the culprit.

As she was eating slower than the others, she watched the complexion of the people who were seated. Suddenly, she met the eyes of Cain. She was very familiar with the way he took away his eyes as if he had been caught peeking.

‘... Don’t tell me.’

She was feeling a little bit ill before, but she wasn’t sure that he had come back quickly because he had been worried about her.

‘Isn’t it an unexpected change to do such extreme behavior, not just thinking or looking at me alone? Even if the blood wasn’t mixed, I am your sister.’

The father had taken a prostitute, and the heir coveted his sister. It must be those father and son, not herself and her mother, who really ought to be criticized. At least the Countess did not turn herself into a prostitute.

‘I didn’t come from a prostitute because I wanted to.’

Finally, she looked at Cain's movements the whole time to see how he felt. When the Countess was worried that he came back too soon, he said coldly to the worried Countess.

"I can send my servant to get the diploma paper later. More than that..."

Cain's eyes were on Aria again as he was answering. When their gaze met, she was convinced by the look.

"It's all the more important because there's a big problem in the house."

"The guardsmen are doing their best, so she'll be caught in no time."

"Well, for that, spring is almost here."

At Cain's cold and sharp reply, Mielle's expression hardened. It was a question of why he was so eager for the prostitute's daughter.

'Maybe I can use Cain to destroy this gutter family.'

It was also revenge for Cain, who had ordered to cut her in the neck.

"It's okay. You don't have to worry about it. As you can see, I've avoided a fatal wound, and I'm on the way to recovery."

The answer was like that, but the look on her face was more pitiful than a dog in the rain. She looked like a poor girl who had no one to lean on in this mansion. Cain, who had been watching Aria for a long time with a vaguely distorted look, clicked his tongue and left the dining room, saying, "I'll get up first."

'What a pleasant surprise!'

Aria continued to eat, trying to swallow her burst of laughter. It was a long time since she felt satisfied with the table.

* * *

A change of heart had happened while he was away, and Cain couldn't control his mind about Aria more than she thought. He took the precious medicine and put it at the door to help Aria recover quickly, often raising his voice, whether the criminal still got caught

On the surface, he said, "This is how the family behaves," but for that, he sometimes looked after Aria, who took a stroll in the garden. Mielle's heart sank as she watched it.

"... Are you really going to visit the princess?"

Mielle's cold gaze touched Emma who was asking.

"Then what can I do in this situation?"

At first, Mielle thought Aria would die. She didn't know the name, but she heard it was a terrible poison that could kill a person instantly. So she didn't doubt it, but Aria, who saved her last breath, lived and woke up the next day.

So I took Berry, who she was going to send out of the capital, for a while. It was to ask why. But Berry said she didn't know the reason, and to make matters worse, there was an unexpected rumor, and a lot of people were moved by the prostitute's daughter.

The angry princess Isis sent a letter asking her to finish her job at all costs, but there was no other way to deal with it. Berry, frightened by the rumors of sympathy for the wicked woman, fled somewhere. The worst never happened like this.

“What, what the hell is this? I’ve sent the princess many letters of apology, but she doesn’t reply!”

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry, miss. I’ll find Berry quickly and do something about this, so please wait.”

The only thing going back to Emma’s desperate efforts to calm Mielle down was Mielle’s cold gaze. That was because Emma had been saying a lot of excuses.

No matter how much she followed Emma, she couldn’t get over it easily this time. No, she couldn’t stand still. Perhaps he was out of his mind, and even Cain came in and said he would resolve the case.

“I’ll be out for a while.”

Without instructing Emma who was just standing there, Mielle looked for a dress on her own and headed to the Duke’s mansion of Frederik in a ready-made carriage. The pale-faced Emma followed hurriedly.

“I’m sorry to say that, but it’s hard for you to meet the princess because she’s busy at the moment. She asked me to deliver it. Since she said she’d be in touch later, why don’t you wait at the mansion?”

However, she could not meet the princess at the Duke’s mansion unexpectedly. It was not easy to meet the busy princess without making an appointment. Emma, who supported Mielle, who was about to collapse at any moment, pleaded with the butler, who blocked the entrance of the mansion tightly.

“Let’s wait. She might get better after giving her a little time.”

“... Well, it'll take a long time.”

“We don't mind what time it is. Isn't that right, miss?”

“Uh, Ugh...”

Looking back at the butler who said he would ask the princess, Emma said that everything would be okay as always because the goddess of fortune was always with Mielle.

It was something that her identity and family had brought. Fortunately, she didn't mean to be cold and kick them out, so she allowed Mielle to wait in the indoor garden.

“She said it would take a little while, but if you don't mind, you can go in.”

“... Thank you.”

Then, the sighing Mielle went into the house, holding Emma's hand tightly as if she had not been angry at all. Fortunately, the servants and maids of the mansion treated Mielle with sincerity.



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Chapter 134. Revenge (II), Part VI

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

Mielle, who eased her anxiety a little by drinking warm tea, asked Emma, “Would the princess be really angry?”

“No, miss. She even allowed you into the garden after this sudden visit.”

“I’m sure she had always been a kind person, so she will show kindness again this time, isn’t that right?”

“Yes, and besides, you are the future Duchess, who has already received the ring of promise.”

“Yes, that’s right.”

She believed Emma without a doubt because she had never been hated or rejected by anyone, but the princess only appeared when the sun was about to set.

“... Miss Isis!”

Because of the longer-than-expected wait time, Mielle's face was very shaded as she called her name. But Isis, who didn't even care about it, sat across from Mielle, greeting her simply. She frowned as she checked the time to see if she wanted to make a very busy show.

"I've been a little busy and have made you wait. I wish you'd made an appointment. I can't believe you're here all of a sudden... What's your business?"

"Ah... that..."

But Mielle murmured because she had nothing else to say, although she had come. Isis, who was as cold and fierce as the winter wind, set her sights on Mielle for a while.

Emma, who saw Mielle blushing with tears because of Isis's changed behavior that had always been benevolent, fell flat on the floor of the garden on her behalf. Mielle, surprised, called Emma's name.

"What is it?"

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry! They're all my fault! I should have watched and checked by her side until she finished the job perfectly, but it was too hasty!"

Isis, who was watching her face for a moment without expression after Emma's unexpected behavior, soon raised her mouth and put a soft smile on her face. Mielle looked at Isis with her eyes shining as if she had forgiven her.

"I know. So you don't have to ask for forgiveness."

Emma, thrilled by Isis's benevolent voice, sobbed little. It was because she had been suffering so much in the meantime. Mielle was also fascinated by Isis's friendly face and believed that she would pass the matter as lightly as ever.

"But Emma, you have to clean up what you started."

"... Pardon?"

"I saw in the letter that there was no way to find Berry as she ran away... Isn't that right, Lady Mielle?"

But what came out of Isis's mouth was hard for Mielle to accept.

'I can't believe you're making Emma finish it. How on earth?'

Isis kindly explained the method to the unanswered women. "It would be perfect if you could achieve your original goal, but if you do that in this atmosphere, it would only make trouble. So..."

Isis's gaze rested with Mielle for a while before moving on to Emma.

'No way!' A startled Emma opened her mouth and trembled.

"You have no choice but to say that someone is the real culprit."

"Miss, Miss Isis!"

Mielle was surprised and leaped from her seat. She then stood next to Isis. No matter how wrong she had been, she couldn't let her go like this since she had followed her like her mother.

As if looking for an opportunity, even the Imperial Castle announced a statement that it was a terrible and awful incident, so they had to solve the case as soon as possible. If someone said that she was a real criminal, she wouldn't die a good death.

"Wouldn't there be another way? Emma... I can't allow her to die."

Mielle was about to cry at any moment.

"Really? It looks like Emma's name is already circulating in the public, but what's the other way?"

This seemed to be the last chance that Isis would be giving to them, so Mielle hurried on to roll her head. There must be something else. After agonizing for such a short while, Mielle opened her mouth as if she had a good idea.

"Why, why don't we pressure the Crown Prince?"

Isis's lips twitched after hearing such a foolish answer and replied.

"You still think I have that kind of power left"

Only then did Mielle hasten to apologize for reminding him that the Aristocratic Party had been ruined by the Crown Prince's ruse. It was because she was in a hurry to save Emma, and she couldn't judge the situation properly. She said such stupid things even though she knew why the princess was so busy.

And if Isis would take this incident out of her mouth... Mielle would end up confessing that she would deliberately raise a problem that could only end up at the expense of one of her maids.

"I thought you could change my mood, but it hurts me that you've become one of my worries."

Miele thought so, too. She could not execute it because there was no one to come forward, and she always wanted to kill the wicked bitch.

And she was confident that it would be very easy. Wasn't she just a daughter of a prostitute at best? Furthermore, she believed that she had heard Berry's pledge to kill her by stabbing her with a knife if she failed. But Berry, who was mistaken for success, ran away, and things turned out to be a mess. It would have succeeded if that bitch hadn't collapsed for nothing.

"Well, I'll try to get someone else. Emma... I can't..."

She wondered if she could get someone else, but she couldn't send Emma like this, so when she made an excuse like that, Isis readily nodded

"Okay, do it your way. I don't owe Emma a grudge, and I just want this all to end."

Isis must have thought that no one else could do this properly except Emma, but she soon returned with a friendly face as if she had lost the heart to vent her anger on Miele.

"I'm sure you know that well. You can't leave a blot on this."

"Yes..."

"It's okay. It happens a lot. Oscar's coming back soon, so you have to shake off the annoying thing, alright?"

Mielle nodded slowly, responding to the soothing question. As Isis said, she had to settle things before Oscar came back. Mielle hurried out of the mansion after she got her last chance. Now that Berry had run away, she had to find someone else to finish the job.

While she was savoring tea for a while in the garden where Mielle had disappeared, the butler brought Isis a letter. It was a letter with a colorful seal made of gold. It was a seal that had never been seen in the empire. The butler was filled with anxiety as he handed over the letter.

"It's a letter I've been waiting for. The Crown Prince is violently rebelling, and it's an inevitable choice for me."

"Miss..."

When the butler tried to say something to Isis, he closed his mouth and left the garden after looking at her cold face. Isis's mouth slowly rose as she read the open letter.

* * *

Aria immediately had a person to follow Mielle when she heard that Mielle had gone out in a hurry. It was John, a knight who had been on the watch a few times for Mielle. He was too weak to protect Aria, but he quickly found out where Mielle had been.

"The mansion of Duke Frederick...?"

"Yes, she certainly headed to the mansion. I waited for a long time, but she did not come out, so it seemed like she was talking about something very important."

He apparently didn't want to hear why he was so late, and John said in a hurry. So Aria handed him a gold coin and rewarded him for his job.

"Shall we go back and wait for her to come out?" asked John, contented with the good reward.

'Not bad.' Aria nodded, and he headed back to the mansion of the Duke.

'Why on earth did she go to see the princess? Just to ask for advice? Or a mood change? No, in this situation that doesn't go the way she wants, she won't be able to afford it.'

It occurred to her that, for whatever reason, the princess might be involved in this incident.

'But why? She's busy right now. At a time when the Aristocratic Party is torn apart and the Crown Prince is rising, is it necessary to waste time dealing with a woman from the common people?'

She thought about the reason why, but she couldn't find an answer. It occurred to her that the princess, who she thought highly of, was not that great.

'Mielle with the help of the princess... I wonder what kind of solution you're going to bring.'

She was reading the numerous letters that arrived with a lighter heart, and she heard the sound of a carriage. She opened the window to see if Mielle had already returned, but it was Cain who had gone out with the Count.

"...?"

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THE VILLAINESS TURNS THE HOURGLASS NOVEL (HTTPS://READLIGHTNOVELS.NET/THE-VILLAINESS-TURNS-THE-HOURGLASS.HTML)

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Chapter 135. Revenge (II), Part VII

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

Somehow, as soon as he got out of the carriage, he stared straight into Aria's room, which made her see him unintentionally. He seemed to not expect that Aria was by the window, and he hurried to look away.

Still, he didn't enter the mansion, and he didn't even move with his subtly raised face, so he seemed to keep looking sideways at herself.

"If I can just persuade him, I'm sure I'll be able to see him push Mielle out of this."

Thinking so, Aria with a smile around her mouth stretched out her arm to close the window. Her indoor overcoat, which was hanging on her shoulders, fluttered in the winter breeze and fell out the window.

It was very unnatural, but Cain was the only one who was looking at Aria, so no one noticed it.

"What shall I do...?"

Aria was in trouble and covered her mouth with her palm. Unless otherwise asked, Cain, who had hurried to the place where her coat had fallen before his servant, slowly picked it up with a little warmth.

“That’s... lady Aria’s clothes. I’ll wash it and bring it to her.”

Cain’s servant said. Washing it was necessary because it had fallen on the snowfield, but Cain held his coat in his hand and was troubled for a moment. He then said while shaking his head,

“No, thanks. I’ll get it for her.”

Cain, who took off his coat and gave it to his servant, climbed the stairs at a slow pace. Aria’s coat was in his hand. Now completely cold, it was only warm in the hands of the strangely hot Cain.

‘A few more steps, it’s on the third floor.’

The fact that he had to go back down after he handed over this coat gradually slowed him down. But it was not so far from Aria’s room, so he soon came to her door.

“Brother.”

‘Did she wait for me?’ As soon as Cain stopped walking in front of the door, Aria opened the door and welcomed him.

“It’s very sweet of you to bring my coat.”

Growing wonderfully beautiful every time he met her, she now exuded a palpable mood that caught the man's eye with just a light smile. He had tried to shake it off a few times, but sometimes he had to grit his teeth to turn his attention which was charmed, rather than shake it off.

'I swore I'd never be like my father...'

He was ashamed of his father, who was so fascinated by a beautiful appearance that he had even given up his mother's seat. But bloodlines couldn't seem to be deceiving, and in the end, he was also a fool who was bewildered by her subtle and beautiful appearance, even though she was his new sister, who was called a wicked woman in public.

"... Next time you'll be the one to fall off, not your clothes if you pull the windows like that."

When he said so under the guise of being blunt, Aria looked very moved.

"Are you worried about me now?"

She looked as if she had been worried by someone for the first time. He was worried that he might have made a mistake because he was so blunt.

Cain, who recalled the treatment Aria had received at the mansion, answered, softening his stiff face, "I don't want to see someone fall."

"Thank you, brother."

Cain, who was briefly distracted by Aria, who thanked frankly, soon gave her overcoat with a loud whimper.

Passing the dirty coat, there was a sense of self-deception about what he was doing now, but now there was even greater disappointment that the need and opportunity to talk to Aria had disappeared. He thought so, but...

"I was just about to be free, but if you have time, why don't you have tea with me?"

Unexpectedly, Cain was given another chance. Aria, who had her hand wrapped over his hand holding her coat, smiled shyly.

Reason told him that he shouldn't have to, so he had to turn it down, but... there was no way he could refuse to see the warmth that those overlapping hands had, and the pupils of her eyes that seemed to hold the light within them.

He nodded silently, feeling somehow that his face seemed to be getting hot, and Aria closed the door and disappeared into the room, asking for a moment.

* * *

Aria, who came back from the door, was wearing a new coat. Her indoor clothes were also changed into a dress made of a material that was light and clinging to the body. Due to the overcoat, all the lines of her body were not being revealed, but it crept up whenever she moved and that melted Cain's heart.

Aria, sitting on a table in the garden on the second floor, took a sip of warm tea. Normally, he would sneak a peek at her, but now he gave a very open glance at Aria. It was a bad look, though it was her own inducement.

"Come to think of it..."

When Aria broke the silence and opened her mouth, Cain, who was looking at her, shuddered with astonishment. This was because it was a shallow act that could be done by a bastard. He had to trim his clothes for fear of shame in his behavior.

Aria pretended not to see it and kept her words. "It's no wonder I've made the house so noisy. I'm sorry."

"... Why do you apologize? You can't say that's because of you."

When she rebuked herself with a pretty sad face, he came back with a calm expression and consoled Aria. Aria, who had managed to put up with it again, had almost laughed at his way of being so different compared to the past or just last year.

"It's true because I'm bad..."

"There's something ugly about everyone. That doesn't justify trying to do harm."

Even though that ugly thing was a fatal drawback that could not be fixed or improved for life, Cain said with a pretty plausible elder's face even though he also hated Aria's origin.

Despite Cain's consolation, Aria stuck to her grim look. Then she lowered her eyes with her hands wrapped around the teacup. The sight made her look like a poor herbivore who had lost her mother.

"Thank you, brother. But I think it's better that I leave the mansion right away once I'm an adult. This could happen again. I'm sure I'll just cause the family trouble."

"... What?"

Cain's voice rose in surprise at the unexpected news of her departure. Although it was common for an adult to get engaged and marry and leave the house, it was usually after marriage.

However, it was very rare for an unmarried aristocrat to gain independence, and most of those cases were because they were evicted from their family. Maybe that was why Cain was surprised.

"I repeat, I don't think you have to go so far because you're not guilty."

He vented his tantrums and anger, albeit faintly. The hand that took the cup of tea and carried it to his mouth was quite rough. Sometimes he even muttered to himself, taking a glance at Aria, who was still holding her wretched face. It must have been quite a shock to hear that Aria was planning to leave.

'I've never openly seduced him, but he's caught in a net, and it's now easier to use.'

'How did he hide such character in the past?' Even though there had been an easy road, she had not noticed it, and she took a handkerchief out of her arms and wiped her eyes in mourning for the foolish past that she had wandered around the thorny path.

"I'm glad you thought so."

"I'm sure everyone thinks so. So don't think about it."

"... Is that so?"

Aria, who asked him back, rose from her seat. As Aria was slowly approaching him, Cain's gaze followed her on its own. Cain, who was again distracted by her clothes that clung to her body whenever she moved, swallowed his saliva.

Aria, staring into Cain's dark eyes, reached out her hand. Its destination was near Cain's neck. Cain's eyes, which shrank slightly under the unexpected circumstances, trembled convulsively, and Aria smiled softly and fixed Cain's tie.

"It's a little crooked."

"... Ah."

Surprised, Cain didn't give a proper answer. Even though the tie was straight, Aria's hand wandered around Cain's neck for a while, making him lose his mind. Even though it was a light touch, Cain swallowed his breath.

Aria, who had finished fixing his clothes, finally took the invisible dust off his hair and said to Cain. He looked as if he were in a state of fascination.

"You're sweet, too... There's only one person I can trust at the mansion."

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Chapter 136. Revenge (II), Part VIII

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

His eyes glazed in front of Aria, who returned to her place after leaving words of significance. Aria, who took a sip of a cold tea, hit the last wedge.

“But I’m still nervous, so what should I do?”

‘Please let Cain punish Emma himself.’ She announced the end of their tea time, hoping to run down Mielle.

“I wish I could drink tea with my brother from time to time... I don’t have much time left until I become an adult.”

Like his father, Cain, who was so easily charmed by beauty, immediately became Aria’s ardent ally. He suggested doubling the number of people looking for Berry at the dining room, where she had just gone down in the case.

“If we drag this any longer, even the family’s credibility will be questioned.”

The Count readily agreed. It was thanks to the fact that he had become quite useful to her. It was only Mielle who had a negative opinion.

“There’s already a lot of people looking for her, so what difference will it make if we add more people?”

When Aria, who had heard her, agreed with a very lonely face, Cain, who frowned at her, responded to Mielle.

“So, Mielle, I think Emma’s name is mentioned as someone involved in this case.”

Mielle was surprised by what her brother said, so she raised her voice.

“Brother, do you even suspect Emma?”

“Where there’s smoke, there’s fire. In fact, Berry has been working for Emma for a long time.”

“Never! She’s not the kind of person who would be involved in such a terrible thing!”

It was unfamiliar to see her face blush, and she was screaming and denying. With that ugly figure she had never seen before, she could see how much Mielle wanted to protect Emma.

‘So, I have to make sure that Emma is the main driver of this. Maybe I’ll see Mielle wailing and fainting. Why didn’t I realize that Emma was a very good prey?’

Aria said soothingly to Mielle, “If she’s not really guilty, it’s a rumor that’s going to go away soon, Mielle. Don’t worry. Isn’t that right, Cain?”

“... Yes.”

But Emma was guilty and would be subjected to terrible punishment. Mielle's face turned white as she watched Aria exchange answers with her brother more friendlier than herself. Intuitively, she must have felt that something was wrong.

* * *

Cain was overly aggressive in trying to solve this incident, doubling the number of people looking for Berry and asking the servants and maids about Berry. And occasionally he made progress, threatening Mielle unintentionally.

“Miss, Emma is out again!”

Aria smiled a sour smile as she listened to Annie's report. She had been close to Mielle's side so far, but she went out alone as soon as Cain put his energy into the investigation.

Now that the time had come to finish this tedious task, Aria had also sent out men, and they found some traces of Berry. She had commissioned most of the mercenaries waiting in the capital, and it was only a matter of time before she was caught.

She didn't know what would happen, and she had talked to Berry's family. She might show up in the near future on her feet. As the night fell, Aria yawned, and Annie sorted out the place and asked, “Do you want to go to bed now?”

“No. I have a lot of letters arriving every day, so I think I'll have to read them all and sleep. Won't they come this far again tomorrow?”

“That's true, but... why don't you have someone else do it? Your reputation has been elevated, but it's too much.”

Annie was astonished as she looked at the stack of letters on the table. But when she couldn't do so, Aria replied briefly, "I'll just think about it."

"Well, shall I wait here?"

"No, go get some rest. I'll just flip through the letters and go to sleep."

"Yes, miss. Good night, then."

Aria, who glanced around Annie as she left the room, was immersed in her work of leafing through the letters again. She didn't know much about what happened outside the empire, but proposals poured in from businessmen in other countries.

They were giving Aria a headache because they had to be judged purely by her knowledge and insight, not by knowing the future. Nevertheless, she looked carefully at each one. It had been several days, and she kept yawning as she went on.

'... Oh my god. My eyes are hurting a lot today, and now it's already late.'

Was it because she was so engrossed with what she was doing? Without even knowing it, a new day was just around the corner. She still had some more letters left, but if she kept reading, then it would be morning soon, so she hurriedly arranged the letters and laid herself on the bed.

'Why can't I sleep...?'

Sometimes she could not fall asleep when she was too exhausted or tired, but even though she closed her eyes, she couldn't sleep easily. So she lay still in her bed for a long time, and suddenly, she felt a strange sense of *deja vu*.

'I don't think I'm asleep. No, am I dreaming?'

But suddenly, without worrying about it, she could hear a very small step, and she could feel someone else's temperature on her neck.

'... It's not a dream!'

Aria opened her eyes.

"... Ah."

"...!"

The intruder in the middle of the night was none other than Asher. She could clearly see him backing away, bewildered by the bright moonlight that permeated through the window. His dark blue eyes' color slowly blurred.

"I didn't mean to surprise you... I'm sorry."

He apologized in a hurry. But at the sudden visit in the middle of the night, Aria was stupefied and couldn't give any response, and she just stared at Asher. Due to the tulips that he left, she knew that he was visiting her sometimes, but as she faced him in person, she was embarrassed.

"Lady Aria...?"

As she looked up to him silently in amazement, he was worried about her and carefully called Aria's name. After Aria's name was called twice, she blinked slowly. She nodded and tried to elicit a reaction.

“... Are you okay? You look pale, and you’ve lost too much weight.”

She was quite different from the usual, and he was worried about Aria, so he put his hand on her forehead. Asher measured her temperature for a while. He then frowned and covered Aria with a blanket.

“You have a fever.”

Asher’s voice had worry and regret mixed together. He talked to himself, saying that it was good to eat any fever reducer, and Aria then realized that she was not having a dream. She opened her tightly closed mouth.

“What the hell is this... What is happening? I’m sure it’s my room, and... it is dawn now, and I think I was about to sleep...”

Asher realized that he was probably worrying about Aria too much. He also realized how big of a discourtesy he committed. He then stepped back and avoided eye contact.

“Mr. Asher?”

When she called his name, he did not answer. He just made eye contact with Aria instead.

“That’s ... I became worried. I heard you had a big incident. I have absolutely no intention of doing bad things to you. It’s hard to believe... but I’m innocent.”

She didn’t doubt it, but Asher made a poor excuse. Knowing that there was no reason, her heart was too full for words when she heard that he was worried. The time, place, and situation were very strange, but she was glad that he just came to see her.

So if she told him that she was purely thankful and showed him that she was okay, it would be over. However, she decided to make fun of him after seeing his ears that were red despite the bluish moonlight.

“So, do you frequently come here at dawn like this, in a woman’s room who’s not even married?”

As she asked softly, Asher turned his head while covering his mouth. It was a little joke, but he was ashamed of it.

Rather, it was Aria that really should be ashamed of seeing him who came to an unmarried girl’s room at dawn. But as funny as it was, he was ashamed of his sudden visit.

At Aria’s little snubbing, Asher hurried to make an excuse. “Well, it was hard to visit during the day because people might see me here. So I stopped by at dawn instead to make sure you’re all right, and then I... I couldn’t just go back because your complexion wasn’t good today and the last time.”

“... Why?”

Aria still asked him even though she was expecting a straightforward response.

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Chapter 137. Revenge (II), Part IX

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

“... I couldn’t do it when I saw you sleeping so soundly. I’m worried. And... I’m sorry for your pain, but I reached out because I couldn’t pass it as your moonlight hair was so beautiful.”

She remembered something similar that she heard from him. He always told her that it didn’t go as he thought when he saw her face-to-face.

Even though he said that she was beautiful, it was an answer that could be misleading. It was too much for the daughter of a prostitute. Was he too noble to have such a conversation with her? He was different from Mielle, who was pretending to be noble. So, as she was hesitant to answer, Asher sat on the side of the bed. He put aside his shyness and said, staring gently at Aria’s eyes,

“I don’t want to see you suffering like this.”

Although he didn't want to see it, there was nothing that he could do. It was all to come in at dawn and see her face secretly. But no matter what she was now, she was the daughter of a prostitute. With the fact that he had an acquaintance, he might get swept away by idle speculation and rumors, and why was he talking about this to her?

"I've been thinking about a lot before, but... I've come to have realized with this incident. I could not meet you easily even though something happened to you."

Aria slowly picked herself up when she heard that. Aria's face, leaning against the bedhead, was full of embarrassment. In the past, she, who had had meetings with countless men, could guess the following words of Asher but tried to deny that her assumption was ridiculous.

"So I felt like I wanted you to be around so that I could meet you anytime, and that no one could hurt you."

What Asher told her was what Aria thought. Aria's eyes shook without rest when she heard what he said.

'Were you just thinking? Or did you mean what you said?' Either way, she was sure she would be a stumbling block in the way of the future of Asher. It was best for him and for her to maintain a relationship without anyone knowing it.

"How dare you! I am just another thing to you."

So she answered like that and looked away. But he didn't seem to want to end what he had just said and didn't give up easily.

"Perhaps... don't you like me or feel uncomfortable?"

“No, that’s not...”

No way. She had never lowered her guard to any man. She had always cooked to her own taste and used her greatest weapon, beauty, to make them lose heart. That was only possible because Aria didn’t feel anything for her opponent, but Asher was the only one she couldn’t resist.

It might be because he had been unusual from their first meeting. The unpredictable mix of situations and encounters had made it impossible to judge on the same lines as the other men she had met.

Perhaps it was because she had continued the meeting from the beginning without expressing her real intention. It had not been for her to not like him from the beginning, no matter what the process had been. No, she had been rather happy when he had worried about herself or she had come across him accidentally.

“But I’m sure I’m not going to be of help to you. I’m from a humble family that doesn’t match Mr. Asher. Everyone will swear.”

It was the plain truth. No matter how much the reputation of Aria was changing, the stigma of being the daughter of a prostitute would always be there. But he didn’t seem to think so.

“Is there anything more stupid than judging a person on such a useless basis? I don’t, but do you judge people by their origin?”

“No...”

“And now I’m not weak enough to be swayed by such trivial rumors.”

There was confidence in his eyes when he retorted. For him, who had long been oppressed and tested, what Aria was worried about seemed to be a trivial matter.

“In addition, you are clever enough to make such rumors useless. At least that’s what I’ve seen.”

He smiled softly saying what he could not easily convey, but he was full of trust and faith even though he did not know much of what Aria had achieved. While staring at Aria, who was speechless, his eyes blushed again.

“I just thought about it, but I didn’t mean to tell you this much... That’s always what happens when I face you. I didn’t mean to ask for an answer.”

Maybe he was trying to ease the burden by appearing suddenly and making surprising remarks, and he added, “Don’t pay much attention to me.” However, Aria did not respond because it was something that she couldn’t help but pay attention to.

“I was going to send this by letter, but instead, now that I’ve had the opportunity, I’d better tell you in person.”

With a soft look, he faced Aria with a serious face. In an instant the mood changed, Aria swallowed her saliva and waited for he would say.

“I caught the criminal who tried to kill you. I personally let people search. I was thinking about what to do, and I thought it would be right to let you know first, so I was going to leave the letter behind.”

He took the letter out of his arms and said. When Aria accepted the letter, he added an explanation.

"The letter says where she is being detained. I'll leave it up to you."

"... That's the maid who tried to hurt me. Do you know what I'm going to do to her?"

"You're doing it for a reason, whatever you do."

As he said, "That is all I can do," he kissed the back of Aria's hand softly and left. Her eyes followed the traces of him, who disappeared like a mirage.

'I'm doing it for a reason, whatever I do...?'

She was always uncomfortable somewhere with impure thoughts in her mind, but when she heard it, she suddenly felt at ease as if she had been justified. Perhaps he could say so because he didn't know everything about Aria, but that was how she was able to put down a load off of her mind.

In the first place, she had never thought of having a special relationship with him because he was going to marry the princess later on, but she thought that she didn't have to avoid it now that she had made a lot of different moves.

* * *

Aria, unable to sleep at all after Asher's visit, hurried to the place Asher had informed her of as soon as dawn came. It wasn't a place to laugh and go for a conversation, so she prepared herself simply and unnoticed. She thought about which of the maids she should take, but she didn't think it would look good, so she went out with the knight, John.

"I want to be alone, so please stay outside and wait for me."

Aria, who told John so, rented a new carriage through the cafe owner and headed alone to the place where Berry was detained. In preparation for any possibility, she put the carriage on standby at a store a little further away from where Asher had informed her and walked for a long time.

It was a shabby warehouse that people had not visited for a long time. She didn't know if there was no surveillance at first, or if he had thought Aria would come and left it empty, but there was no one there.

Screech. When she opened the old door and went inside, she saw Berry lying in a corner of a warehouse with scattered straw. Even though she had run away nicely, she was now in a shabby mess.

'Why would you do such a bad thing? You don't have anything.'

As she raised her head at the sound of the door opening, she showed off the white of her eyes as soon as the evil woman of the world she had tried to poison appeared.

"Ah, ah, ah...!"

'What does she want to say?' To prevent self-harming, the only thing flowing through Berry's mouth was an ugly groan because a cloth was pushed deep into her throat.

"It's been a long time, Berry. I've been looking for you for a long time. Where and how have you been?"

Then Aria slowly approached Berry. She grabbed Berry's hair as she approached.

"How do you feel when the evil girl you thought was dead came back to life?"

As Aria smiled brightly and asked, Berry burst into tears. There was still a groan of unknown meaning from her mouth. With the fear of imminent death, she seemed crazy.

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Chapter 138. Revenge (II), Part X

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

“Why did you do such a bad thing? Did you really think you can kill a wicked girl? You’re the one who came into my maid with a bad idea to me who was still there in the first place, right?”

As if she hadn’t washed her hair for a long time, the palm of her hand was greasy, and she brushed it off. She thought that she could beat that dirty little girl to death, but she was so dirty that it was gone.

‘I don’t have to worry about it now because I’ll get rid of her once it’s all over.’

There was no need to hurry. They would all be ruined anyways. That was why they should have taken Berry abroad.

‘Why do you give me this precious opportunity?’ Aria, smiling as usual, crawled into the corner and opened her mouth as she looked at Berry who was shaking.

"I'll make a suggestion. I'm sure it's not a bad offer for you. When everything's done, I'll make you run abroad, of course, with no injuries."

When she said so, Berry's trembling body hardened. Her slowly lifting face was full of questions.

Aria with a bright smile added a kind explanation again. "You can't live any longer because you failed to kill me. Why don't you just follow me?"

Aria asked Berry, who had been mumbling for a long time.

"Why don't you answer?"

"Ugh..."

Berry nodded because she couldn't say the right words because her mouth was blocked. Then Aria, who had loosened her rope and gave her freedom by removing the cloth which had her mouth shut, recited what she had to do.

"It's very simple. You just have to say a few things."

"Yes, yes...!" She nodded, ready to do so, even if she was asked to lick all the dirty dirt out of here right now, she would do it.

Satisfied with this, Aria laughed and said, "Come back to the mansion tomorrow morning. Come and tell them all the details of what you did and who made you do it."

But in the end, Berry's face turned pale when she was told to confess.

"... Yeah? But if I do..."

If she confessed what she had done, she would be taken by the guards immediately. They would behead her right away. Disbelief rose in her eyes. She seemed to think that if she confessed, she would be sent to prison with the real culprit.

‘Foolish.’ Aria laughed and answered as if her thoughts were obvious.

“Berry, if I had intended to kill you, I wouldn’t have come here by myself like this. Why would I keep you alive for another day?”

Then Berry, who was agonizing for a moment, answered in a very small voice.

“Are you going to catch the real killer together...?”

It was a very bold answer, as the girl who had carried out the poisoning. Aria, smiling, asked, “Why did you do such a foolish thing when you were so wise?”

“That’s right. I want to catch the real criminal. I hope the real criminal alone will take all the blame to herself. You’re only the accomplice, and if you escape alone, she will feel it’s unfair.”

Berry’s eyes trembled. Still, it seemed doubtful that Aria would save her.

Aria twisted her hair around her finger and said playfully, “I can’t help it if you don’t believe it. But think about it. This problem will not be solved if you run away just like that, is it? How long do you think you’ll be able to get away?”

She was already afraid and had run away by betraying Emma. There was no one to help Berry. If she kept running away, she would be caught soon.

“So you’ll have to take advantage of this opportunity I’m giving you.”

Aria omitted to say that. Otherwise, she would not be safe, but Berry swallowed her saliva as if she had noticed it.

“Then I’ll leave the choice to you. You can make any excuse. It wouldn’t be a bad idea to live with the sympathy that your family was held, hostage. And most of all, I’m not dead. Make your own story. Maybe it’s your last choice.”

Aria was about to put a piece of gold on the floor and turn around, saying, “I want you to eat something.”

“Well, miss...!”

Aria heard Berry’s voice behind her back. There was already power in her voice as to whether the choice was over. It was fast, too. Yeah, she didn’t have a choice anyway. As Aria smiled brightly and turned around, Berry rolled her eyes around and opened her mouth carefully.

“Well, how do I get to the mansion...?”

Aria, who had never thought of it before, opened her eyes and covered her mouth.

“My God. I almost made you walk. I’ll send a wagon here in the morning, so you can take it.”

Berry nodded and said she would do so.

The look of doubt until now was gone, and now she had no doubt because she believed Aria would save her. Aria, who confirmed the desirable face, left the warehouse expecting a pleasant schedule tomorrow.

* * *

After meeting Berry, Aria was really willing to keep her promise, so she arranged a wagon and food for her to leave for a foreign country. Unknowingly, Annie helped her and asked, cocking her head,

“Are you going to travel somewhere far, miss? No... for that, the carriage is so normal...”

“Someone’s going on a long journey.”

She would go so far away that she wouldn’t be able to come back. Without answering Annie’s question, “Who the hell is she?” Aria read the book and the letter and waited for Berry.

But as morning came and even a single trace of Berry couldn’t be seen, she felt a little nervous.

‘Don’t tell me you’ve changed your mind.’

“Miss, you should eat some lunch.”

“... I should.”

“Is there a problem?”

As Aria was motionless because it was already the promised time, Annie urged her to go down to the dining room. ‘I was sure I sent a carriage for her this morning, but why hasn’t she arrived yet?’ Aria, who was frightened, was about to leave the room, worrying if she had fled again, but suddenly, someone called Aria’s name.

"Miss Aria."

"...?"

As she turned her head, there was something black beside the door. Surprised by it, Aria managed to hold back her scream and identified the face that was only slightly exposed, wrapped by a cape. It was Berry, who didn't show up until the end of the morning.

"... You had an amazing talent to surprise me."

She seemed to have come up to the third floor without being found out because she had worked at the mansion for a long time. Berry, who found Annie after Aria, hurriedly covered her face with a cape.

"Who are you?"

"She is my guest so stay back in your room. I'm going to skip today's meal."

"Again? Would you like me to bring you some porridge?"

"No, I'm okay."

Everyone wouldn't be able to eat lunch today anyway. After sending the worried Annie, she and Berry went into the room. Berry stood in the middle of Aria's room. Her appearance looked so nervous.

"Why did you come straight to my room without doing your job?"

"... I'm sorry to say this, but I had to make sure there's a way to live."

As expected, Aria opened the window, saying, "Don't worry." Outside, there was a carriage waiting for her.

"Is that really my carriage?"

"Well, I've got food ready, so don't worry about it. And I've also got plenty of money for the trip."

Aria brought out the pocket she had in her drawer. It contained enough gold coins to live on without having to work for the rest of her life. Berry, who had confirmed it, sighed deeply, as if determined, and soon disappeared from Aria's room.

And in that moment, from the first floor of the mansion, which had always remained calm, a mysterious scream rang out.

"Yaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!"

The loud footsteps behind it and the shouting came as far as Aria's room, located on the third floor. Aria's mouth crept up.

'Is there any music in this world that could be more beautiful than that?'

Aria, who slowly went down to the first floor, appreciating it as if it were Prima Donna's song, could find Berry arrested by strong servants and weighed down on the floor. Her face on the floor was so sorry that she opened his eyes round with her mouth covered with her hand.

"Miss, Miss Aria!"

"Miss! It's dangerous here!"

The most dangerous thing here was Aria, but the servants and maids worried about her and added strength to the hands that had laid Berry.

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Chapter 139. Revenge (II), Part XI

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

Aria wondered if Berry was going to die before she confessed. She burst into tears as if to be overcome with fear, and the Count belatedly raised his voice, saying, “What the hell is all this fuss about!”

The uproar was so great that after the Count stopped eating, and Mielle, Cain, and the Countess came out after him. They all looked unhappy with the situation.

“Ma, master.”

“We’re in trouble.”

The real owners of the mansion appeared, and the servants and maids crowded in the hall paved the way for a good view of the arrested Berry.

“... Be, Berry?!”

Mielle's face was horrified to find Berry. Her eyes looked as if they were going to pop out. How dreadful and fearful she must be now that Berry had returned after betraying herself. Emma following her was also stone-hardened with her mouth open.

The Count, who was embarrassed because he didn't know if she came back into the mansion on her own feet, shouted, "Please contact the security forces," and the Countess, who was relieved of her legs, fell on the floor unseemly. Cain hurried to Aria and stood guard against her.

"I, I have...! Words...! Ugh...!"

Berry managed to wring her voice from under pressure. Everyone's eyes were on her, and as if she were trying to stop her from speaking, Mielle sank and wrapped her head in fear.

"Uh, we have to let her shut up and call the guards! She's too dangerous!"

Emma raised her voice too much and made a fuss, but Aria had no intention of letting Berry leave, and of losing the opportunity she had barely made.

"Berry's got something... I think she's going to say something important."

Then Aria grabbed Cain's sleeve and answered. It was a small voice that was only audible to Cain. Cain stared for a moment at Aria's hand, which caught up in his sleeve, and her pale face, and soon insisted in a loud voice that they needed to hear Berry's.

"It's a woman with no power. She's tied, so there's no danger. It'll take time for the guards to arrive, so we'll have to hear why she showed up."

The Count nodded at his reasonable remarks. When things didn't go as planned, only Mielle and Emma showed fear in cold sweat.

“But, but what if she hides a weapon in her body? I’m so scared...!”

At that abominable look, Aria answered with her head sticking out from Cain’s back,

“It’s also a little bit like that, too. So, Mielle, wouldn’t you rather go up to the room? I want to listen to her because I have a guess...”

“Yes, miss. You’d better go up.”

Emma’s expression was horrified when Annie, who was no different from Aria’s slave, helped her. How upset she was because there were two maids who betrayed them.

“Mielle, as you say, it may be dangerous, so go up.”

The Count also urged her, who had nothing to do with the incident, to go up to the room, and after all, Mielle wouldn’t leave, clinging on Emma’s arm, saying, “It might be okay because there are so many people.” So Aria glanced at her from behind Cain’s back.

At the same time that she was given a chance to speak, the trap of squeezing Berry’s body loosened a little. When Berry saw the glistening eyes of Aria, she took a big breath and slowly opened her mouth,

“... In, in fact, I was threatened. She threatened me to kill my family if I don’t poison the tea of Miss Aria.”

Emma clenched her fist so tightly that her fingernails stuck in her palm at the lie. Looking at her bulging eyes, she looked eager to shout at the nonsense. Berry’s voice rang again in the silence of the hall.

"So there was no choice... I received the poison... but I hesitated and agonized several times because I couldn't poison the tea, and Miss Aria, who had noticed me feeling a little anxious, asked me why several times."

This drew attention to Aria. Berry's eyes were too, which were enveloped in anxiety. Tears welled up in her pale face, and she answered with her face on Cain's back,

"I, I remember... Berry's condition was very strange... so I told her to tell me everything and it would be fine, but... sob."

Aria's tears seeped into her light indoor shirt, and Cain stiffened. The answer was not yet complete, so Aria squeezed out her tears for a long time and then opened her mouth again.

"I'm sorry. I remember that time all of a sudden. I was so sorry about Berry... Anyway, then I advised Berry to choose the way to be happy. So I said I would forgive her for making any decision. I didn't know exactly, but... I thought she was worried about something bad. So, uh, that's why Berry put it in my tea...! She might not be wrong. I encouraged her. Sob..."

Aria, who was feeling intense again, wrung out her tears. The rumor that there would be a real culprit turned around and everyone in the hall was convinced without a doubt and sympathized with Aria's grief. Only Annie and Jessie, who all remember the situation, cocked their heads. And...

"... then, who the hell is the real culprit?"

The overcast voice of the Count rang in the hall. There was no need to hear the answer. There was one person everyone suspected. She was a very reasonable person. In a flash, everyone's eyes fell on Emma.

"This, this is slander! I'm not the real culprit!" exclaimed Emma, whose face turned white. Mielle, who grabbed her arm, also sympathized with her and complained of injustice.

"Right! Emma's innocent! Emma can't do that, can she? Berry! How could you do this?"

It was the first time for Mielle to speak so loudly that the crowd looked very embarrassed. In it, Aria alone smiled contentedly.

'You're crawling into hell, aren't you? Isn't it very strange? How can she assert that Emma is innocent?'

Cain also seemed to find it strange so he asked Mielle, "Mielle, how do you know she's not the culprit? Do you happen to know any other real criminal?"

"Well, that's not it, but... you know Emma's good personality! Emma is never the kind of person!"

Cain sighed at the groundless argument. The Count also asked Emma for the truth, ignoring Mielle, who exclaimed that she was innocent, whether he thought the claim was worthless.

"Emma, I don't want to think you did it, but you'll have to offer a convincing explanation because it was done by your maid."

How could she explain when she was accused of being a real culprit by a poisoned criminal? It was also claimed by the accomplice herself. There was no one to overcome the slander.

Emma made no excuse when asked to prove something that no one could prove. She just had a pale face and said, "Not me, not at all..." She repeated the words like a parrot.

Mielle, who was the only one who could save her, also failed to come up with a plan, and said, “Emma’s not the woman to do so.”

For Aria, it was a golden opportunity to drive the two into the abyss of hell. “Really...? Emma really gave Berry that order...? Huh? Berry, speak it out! Don’t you know? I can’t believe it...!”

Aria, who had not missed the opportunity, asked in tears, as if she could not believe it, or did not want to. It was an act that had come to mind dozens of times just for this moment in a long time. It was a tearful act that someone had introduced in the past to bring her down to the pit.

Back then, there had been many viewers around her, just like now. But the Prima Donna’s role in acting had changed. It would be her who wept but laugh in the future, and Mielle would fumble in hell, and would slowly die. Berry, too, was willing to throw herself into her play without missing a chance.

“... right, miss. In the first place, I went into being your maid according to Emma’s instruction. It was all Emma’s order.”

“You bitch! You’re lying?!”

Emma, who couldn’t beat her anger even before she was finished, jumped at her. It was her outburst that had no place to run away anymore. Emma, who ran to Berry in an instant, grabbed her hair and shook it roughly. The hall was filled with Berry’s screams.

“Ahhh! Emma! Ouch...!”

“Do you think you can survive with such a lie?”

“Emma?! Emma!”

Mielle, who was next to Emma ran out after losing her temper, fell on the floor and shouted her name. Then, she shuddered and shouted only her name, startled by the terrible sight she had never seen before. She looked as if she had lost her mother.

“Stop it!”

“Stop it!”

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Chapter 140. Revenge (II), Part XII

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

Strong male servants clung to Emma to set her apart, who was strangling Berry's neck. But Emma, half-crazily didn't release her strength in her hand trying to harm Berry, and the hall quickly became a mess.

"Emma! What are you doing?"

"Oh my god..."

"Emma! Stop it! Please...!"

The Count and Countess raised their voices to mourn the tragedy. Mielle cried, not caring about her beautiful face being destroyed. All her maids were surprised and did nothing, so Mielle, who had never been neglected in her life, had to shed tears on the cold floor.

"Yes, it's worth seeing at this much. I must let them know who did what and how."

As soon as she confessed exactly what she had done, this terrible scene happened. The noble Mielle cried out on the floor, and Emma, who had been guarding her, turned into a demon.

In this desirable Abyss, the frightened Aria held Cain's shirt tightly and hid behind his back. 'How did he interpret it?' Cain turned his head to see it and clenched his teeth.

"Brother, brother..."

"It's all right, Aria. There's no one to hurt you anymore."

He played a very friendly brother to Aria in fear. She swallowed her ridicule and pointed out his folly.

'You were the one who killed me in the past.'

It was Cain, who had directed to strike that wicked bitch on the neck. But how was it now? He was pushing his own sister and her lovely maid to the edge of the cliff as opposed to the past.

It was regrettable that she had had such a great weapon but could not use it properly. She had been foolish of herself not to notice it. She had an unfortunate past that she didn't have to experience.

Nevertheless, she was grateful to heaven for giving her the chance to dispel that resentment. Having experienced the past, she had become such a vicious wicked woman.

"Let go of this! Everything that bitch says is a lie! Please believe me!" Emma, who was held by the servants, shouted, struggling with all her might, like Aria of the past, "Please, please believe me. I'm not! It's a misunderstanding!"

"I, I heard how Mrs. Emma brought the poison!"

But Berry had the last key to drive Emma in, and the key opened wide to the door of the answer, and the gate of hell that Emma had to walk through. Emma's struggle had stopped.

"Sob. Emma..."

Only the cry of Mielle was heard in the stillness of the hall. It was like a prelude to running the final movement of death. Aria, who had been entrusted to that tender melody, fell to the floor, taking her hand off Cain's shirt.

"Everything happened because I was bad..."

'Alas, I wish I had used the hourglass.' Then she wouldn't wake up, so she would be a tragic heroine. Jessie, who was next to her, hugged Aria and wept. The Countess's cries also echoed. At Aria's pitiful appearance, Cain's hand hovered in the air.

"Miss...!"

With Jessie's call, sharpness was added to the gaze of those heading to Emma. It wouldn't cool down even if they tore her limbs apart. Amid all the cruel words coming and going, the Count of Justice raised his hand to clear up the situation.

"Emma, I can't help but ask you for your sins, even if she has evidence. I never thought you'd do anything like this, but... In any case, the sin of trying to harm the master will be great and you will not escape death. And Berry."

Berry shuddered loudly when her name was called.

“No matter what the reason might be, it is true that you have also done wrong, and you will have to pay for it.”

“The Count...!”

She fluttered in the sentence and looked at Aria, the only one who could save her. Her stiff face was a mixture of disappointment, injustice, and betrayal.

‘You don’t have to worry about it. Isn’t it natural to save you? If I betray Berry here, everything will come to nothing.’

Aria, who wiped away her tears from the eager gaze, pleaded for her to pardon her sins on her behalf.

“Father, I fully understand Berry’s feelings. I would have done evil if my father and mother, Mielle, and Cain, were taken as a hostage. I’m sure everyone would do. Rather, I think it’s the bad guy who abandons his or her family. Isn’t that right, brother?”

Cain replied yes to Aria’s sad face seeking an explanation.

“In addition, she hesitated several times, but I gave her permission to do so... I’m sure it was hard enough for her to die. I think that’s why she was here. So, please... I don’t want you to accuse Berry of...”

The Count gave a fake cough at the earnestness. The maids, who had already been on Aria’s side for gifts and favors many times, admired her character.

“How sweet of her to be...”

“She is the one who tried to kill her...”

In the situation where Emma had come to commit all the sins alone, Mielle gave a sidelong scowl at Aria, and faced with this, Aria looked around and raised her mouth so that only she could recognize it.

‘Why can’t you come forward to relieve her of her sins? No! Emma’s innocent! That’s what I told her to do!’

But Mielle, whose most precious thing in the world was herself, couldn’t do anything for Emma, who was cornered and couldn’t find a hole to escape, and it was Emma alone who was eventually taken by the arriving guards.

* * *

“Dear Miss, ...Thank you very much. It’s all thanks to you.”

Berry, who had helped to add weight on Emma’s sins with consistent lies, thanked Aria before she left. His hair was dragging on the ground when she bent her waist-deep.

“Be nice from now on. You’re not given a chance twice.”

Aria, who had said something disagreeable, answered, shaking off her dirty hair.

“Yes...! I didn’t know who I really had to serve, and I have nothing to say for committing a serious crime...”

“It’s a good thing you’ve regretted it now. Goodbye. I’ll be relieved if you send me a letter to see if you’re doing well.”

As Aria said, “Don’t stop personal ties in the future, she was thrilled to say that Berry nodded greatly.

"Yes! Yes! Miss! I will do that for sure! So... please stay healthy!"

Berry, who said goodbye to her, wiped her tears off and climbed into the wagon. The carriage set off as soon as she got up, having already set her destination. Aria turned and entered the mansion as she stared at the disappearing carriage. Annie, who had been staring at Berry all the time, asked Aria as if she could not understand.

"Miss, why did you forgive Berry? Wasn't Berry the same bitch as Emma?"

Jessie also nodded her consent. Aria smiled a deep smile and explained it kindly to her.

"Annie, the wicked are bound to pay for it, even if I don't have to punish her. God is watching us all."

Maybe they didn't understand what she meant, and Annie and Jessie cocked their heads. Aria climbed the stairs to her room, thinking 'You may never know it all your life.'

The wagon left and was heading in a completely different direction from the Kingdom of Croa where Berry would like to go. It was about a day after she left the capital that Berry noticed.

"Where, where am I? Why is it such a thick forest after a day...?"

About an hour after the driver stopped the carriage to check its surroundings, Berry, feeling strange, carefully went out of the carriage.

"...?!"

And when she checked out, the startled Berry sat down and uttered a silent groan. For somehow the driver and horse were gone, and only the body of the carriage lay in the woods.

“Oh, no...!”

She had been out of the capital for a whole day, but if it was a dense forest...!

It was clear that the forest of labyrinths had no end, even the emperor had given up. It was the forest that anyone could never escape without a compass and a ride. So nobody easily walked into the forest.

When she thought she had been abandoned there, Berry let out a strange groan, shedding tears in the fear of being pushed in and out. The cry of the beast seemed to be heard coming closer.

The only thing left for her, whose bag was stolen behind the carriage; was a carriage and a body that would soon break down after being attacked by the beasts.

* * *

A few days later.

“Miss, I got a letter from Berry who left.”

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Chapter 141. Revenge (II), Part XIII

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

Jessie, who brought Berry's letter, didn't look bright. She still seemed displeased to have let Berry go the same way. Aria, who roughly read a letter signed with a seal that she had sent from the Kingdom of Croa, said soothingly,

"Jessie, you don't have to be so angry."

"But I still can't believe she went abroad safely after she did that terrible thing to you."

'How can I not love Jessie for her sake?' Aria, determined to give her a very big present when all was done, left the room for Emma's judgment today. The Countess looked a little dark when she saw Aria on the first floor.

"Aria, since the results are fixed anyway, I don't think you need to go... Are you sure it's okay?"

"... Yes, they may need my testimony."

It was already a set result. The Countess discouraged her because the victim did not have to attend, but Aria's determination to see Emma's end was firm.

Mielle's eyes were red and they were also swollen as if she had cried for days. She must have tried to cover them with her hat as much as she could, but she could not escape the eyes of Aria, who had watched her with the hawk's eyes.

'You want to scream that she didn't do it.'

It was obvious to see that she sometimes bit her lips and trembled. She might see Emma's neck cut off. And the main enemy was right in front of her.

"... I'm not feeling well so I'll leave in a little while."

'Yeah, I guess you don't want to ride a carriage with me.'

Emma had been taking care of Mielle since birth, and the Count understood her feelings and nodded to do it.

As soon as he returned from the academy, a terrible thing happened, and Cain turned around and looked at Mielle and clicked his tongue. It was nowhere to be seen that he had cared so much about his sister in the past.

The Count spoke to Aria in a friendly way that might be only for Mielle, "Aria, it's going to be hard, but hang in there a little."

"Thank you..."

Inside, she wanted to hold a party and drink a toast, but ended up quietly answering, with a gentle smile. Thanks to Aria's acting of a poor girl, the road to the court was silent. Even after her arrival, she was able to play the heroine of the perfect tragedy with Cain's desperate escort.

"Oh, my God, the victim, Lady Roscent is here."

"Where...? No, Lady Roscent is so beautiful?!"

"It must be jealousy too, as it is rumored. She was really beautiful."

Aria's appearance made a noise in the audience's seat. Her unadorned beauty added weight to her sorrow.

Cain, who glances at her, asked with a very friendly face, "Are you all right?"

"... Yes? Oh, yes. Of course."

In the past, Cain's contemptuous eyes had been on her. The look in his eyes, which he had treated as if she had been a filth defaming the family's reputation.

Aria, who shed tears that didn't seem to come, in everyone's sympathy, waited for the trial to begin. It took some time to start as she arrived a little early, and Mielle, who had a late start, appeared just before the trial began.

"Your eyes are red... are you all right?"

'Who did you cry that way for?'

When Aria asked, Mielle closed her eyes and answered whether she didn't want to look at her.

"... it's all right."

The Count and Cain, who knew the reason for her tears, sighed and looked away. The Countess held Aria's hand and gritted her teeth. Public opinion was so inclined that she could express her feelings.

Aria understood that Emma was precious to Mielle, but it was incomprehensible to cover up the woman who went so far as to kill her in front of the victim.

'Foolishly, you've ruined what you've accomplished yourself. Isn't she like her past self? This is her past self! Who knew she could not be recognized by anyone but could not control herself from being perverse.'

But in the eyes of the audience, Mielle's gloom and silence were seen as a result of her anxiety for her sister, Aria.

Emma was very thin when she saw her face after a long time. Seeing bruises and wounds visible in places, there seemed to have been violence in the course of interrogation. Her legs were limping, though feeble.

The judge appeared as soon as she stood in the middle of the courtroom, with a puzzled look on her face. Aria didn't know the face and the name, but the judge was someone who succeeded in the blood of the Imperial family. Other royal families, not related to the power struggle, had been holding high-ranking government posts in the capital due to lack of land. It was also aimed at the Aristocratic Party in check.

The judge, who was seated, looked over the documents that had already been filed, and at the same time informed them of the beginning of the trial, and asked about her guilt. It was already due to the obvious results.

“Do you admit the sin of murdering Lady Roscent Aria?”

“...”

With her mouth shut, Emma had no answer or movement. She just stared at the floor with her head down a little. Her attitude of refusing to acknowledge both evidence and witnesses chilled the judge’s eyes.

“Let me ask you again. Do you admit it?”

“...”

She again gave no answer this time, so the judge shook her head with a sigh. It seemed that she was not happy to take the time because the trial had an evident result anyway.

“... OK, then I have to deal with it as it is on the document.”

She lifted her head when she signed something on the document. There was no reason to delay the trial anymore because the criminal’s guilt was confirmed. So Aria thought it was over, but the judge looked around the hall and opened her mouth.

“Is Lady Roscent Aria here?”

Aria answered in a quiet voice, when her name was suddenly called,

“Yes? Oh, yes...”

Then the judge, who looked at Aria, stopped trying to say something and slowly frowned. When Aria cocked her head in wonder, the judge, who was staring at her for a long time, shook her head and began to ask some questions,

“Is it true that you have been harmed by Emma, the sinner?”

“Oh, yes... I heard so.”

“Then do you intend to absolve her of her sins?”

Aria, who pretended to be sad about the ridiculous question, opened her eyes wide. The audience also stared at the judge with a face asking what kind of question she was asking. Aria was surprised not to answer, and the judge explained why,

“The dozens of petitions arrived in a short period of time. It was a petition for the forgiveness of the sinner sent by an anonymous majority. It was the first time I had received so many petitions, so I just asked if there was any other reason.

She was also dumbfounded as she laughed, saying ‘no.’ There were dozens of petitions for the sinner who were already well-assured. If she doubted that they were another accomplice, there was no problem. That was why she said it on purpose. There was some hope in Emma’s face.

If it were Mielle, she would definitely forgive her sin in this situation. Even if she would forgive her sin, anyway, she would be severely punished for, according to the law. But she could avoid the death penalty, if Aria, who was the victim and an aristocrat, pardoned her.

Aria, however, was different. She was not a kind of stupid, wicked woman who pretended to be blind and good.

“No, I don’t intend to forgive Emma’s sins. She tried to hurt me for no reason... so I thought someone else might be the victim again... I just want her to pay the price.”

When Aria answered with a very sad face, some of the audience in their seat forgot about the time and place and gave admiration due to her strong emotions. The majority made a look as if it was right. And from among them, she saw Emma in despair.

“Then I’ll have to do so as the victim, Lady Roscent, says.”

The judge pronounced Emma’s death, raising her mouth as if she had heard a very satisfactory answer. It was a very quick decision.

“To the sinner, Emma, I sentence her to hang.”

With those words, Emma sank into her seat. What did she expect, even though it was a natural result? Aria identified the face of Mielle, who was sitting next to the Count.

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Chapter 142. Revenge (II), Part XIV

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

With her mouth wide open and eyes fixed on Emma, she trembled as if she was about to fall. Therefore, it was not the Countess, but the Count that read her expression.

“... I'll go first.”

She was displeased to her, but she was his biological daughter, so the Count rose up and said it would be better for him to go first. The Countess, without even giving a glance, replaced the answer by simply nodding her head quietly.

“Are you all right, Aria?”

Aria nodded, feeling the warm hand her mother was holding. Cain, who did not follow his father, also gave a worried look to Aria.

The Count was also about to say something comforting, but he soon closed his mouth. He seemed to have decided it would be better to take Mielle and leave in a hurry. Emma was looking this way, and Mielle was staring at her.

“... Mielle!”

“My God...”

It was then. Suddenly Mielle fell to the floor. The astonished Count hastened to support her, and the Countess, who had been ignoring her all the time, rushed to Mielle. With Cain’s voice calling for a doctor, the audience seat became a mess in no time.

“You bitch! You wicked woman! It’s all because of you! If it wasn’t for you! Worthy of death... Aaargh!”

Emma, who was watching this, cursed Aria, and was struck by a guard’s fist, she also lost consciousness and was dragged out. What a pity that she would no longer be able to do evil for her master. Aria rushed to Mielle, who had fallen, and whispered in a very small voice, pretending to check her complexion,

“Mielle... a poor girl. Did you think I didn’t know you’d get Emma and Berry to poison my tea?”

Then she did not completely lose her senses, and Mielle’s eyes opened in a flash. She stared at Aria, trembling and wondering what that meant. Her eyes were bloodshot and there was no beauty of an aristocratic lady, like when she had shed her own tears of blood from her own eyes, when she had been forced to just cry out in the face of her ridicule!

‘How long have I been waiting for this?’

She had been waiting for this moment when she was going to give it all back to Mielle. The revenge against her was only beginning, but Aria’s whole body was filled with great satisfaction.

‘Now, why don’t you cry like I did in the past and do your frantic attempts?’

In the comfort of others, Mielle came to her senses, and Aria also spoke with a disturbed face,

“Fortunately, Mielle woke up. But you’d better hurry up and let her see a doctor.”

Mielle held on her chest, breathing heavily in the chaos that she had never imagined that the foolish wicked woman would result.

Aria was hoping Mielle would scream and spit out some cursing. Even in this situation where Emma, who she had been following like her mother, would be executed, she did not show that much. In a way, Mielle must be a stronger woman than herself.

“The Count of Roscent!”

Lane appeared out of nowhere through the uproar. Then he urged the Count to hurry to the hospital he knew, saying it was nearby.

Lane was a trustee of all the Count family, and they moved in perfect order at his words. Meanwhile, Lane whispered his original purpose in a voice small enough to be heard only by Aria,

“There’s someone waiting for you.”

Aria, realizing who Lane meant, nodded slowly. She wondered if he had been here since the beginning. ‘Because he was worried? Or by realizing another true color of herself doing things this big?’

Cain, who watched Aria quietly leave her seat soon after taking advantage of the uproar, followed her with a strange look.

Asher was waiting for Aria not too far away. Aria's steps to the place Lane told her were heavy. 'I wish he'd been worried, but... what if it's not.'

As if she had been well versed in the court geography, fortunately there was no one in contact throughout the journey to the place Lane had informed. When there was not much left to the destination, someone suddenly called Aria's name,

"Aria!"

"... Cain?"

Surprised, Aria looked around for nothing. 'Why on earth did he follow her so far, leaving his poor sister alone?'

Cain also looked around once and said strangely, "I don't think this is a way out."

"Ah..."

As she continued to move to places where there was no reason for the general public to look, Cain seemed to be following her and talking. She thought she had sneaked out alone, but Lane didn't stop Cain. Aria blamed Lane for the situation and changed the topic.

"What about Mielle? Is she all right? She didn't seem to be breathing very well..."

Cain frowned that he had read Aria's words about what he was doing here without caring for his younger sister. He seemed to think only now that he had just thrown out his sick sister and followed Aria. Unexpectedly, he stammered out an excuse,

“They said she’s going to the hospital, so I’m sure she’ll be okay. I don’t think it’s temporary because she’s not even a child with a chronic disease. And my father went with her, so I’m sure she’ll be fine.”

However, this could not be the reason to follow Aria. Whoever was next to Mielle, it was true that he followed his fake sister, who had moved away from the eyes of others rather than her own sick sister.

“I think it will be a big deal because it’s not a chronic disease. She couldn’t breathe well, so maybe she’s got a dire illness. You have to stand by her.”

When she said, “Why don’t you go to your sister because everything you have to do today is over?” Cain couldn’t answer for a moment and stared on the floor, because he realized what she meant.

But Cain continued, “That’s true, but... I don’t think she’d get well if I go there, so I think I’d better go back with you in case I don’t know.”

‘Asher will be waiting.’

He never stopped asking where she was going with useless excuses. She was unable to proudly say, “I’m going to meet the Crown Prince,” so when Aria delayed her answer and made an excuse for Mielle, he was even more determined to go back with her, as if his doubts had deepened.

Cain, who glanced at something over Aria’s shoulder, stiffened his face, as she was worried that Asher might just go back when the time was delayed.

‘Don’t tell me...?’

As soon as he tried to look back on the idea that passed through his head, he heard the voice of Asher calling Aria's name earlier than the act,

"Lady Aria."

His voice calling for the name was quite cold. It was like the first time she had met him in the general store, and for an instant her whole body was nervous.

"... Who is it?"

Cain expressed strong hostility and vigilance at the sudden appearance of a mysterious man. Aria was also perplexed because she did not think about the situation the two were facing.

"And you?"

Asher's inquiring tone was very sharp. Cain was asking Aria, but she did not answer in difficulty, so Asher took it for her.

"I asked first."

Cain answered, scanning up and down the appearance of Asher. Perhaps it was because he did not look like the Crown Prince, but as Cain was showing signs of discomfort as he retorted, Aria's face turned white.

"You don't even know how polite it is to introduce yourself first before asking about others."

"I know I don't have to be polite to the intruder."

Suddenly, the two were in a war of nerves, so Aria rushed in. It was a very bad situation.

“Brother, I have an appointment with this man, so please go back to Mielle.”

“... you have an appointment with him?”

Cain asked again with disbelief when he heard that Aria had an appointment with a strange man.

As soon as Asher saw him, he took a step closer to Aria’s side and said, “Now it’s clear who’s the intruder.”

Asher triumphantly said as if it was not a big thing... It looked so childish and she was about to say that he should leave now, but Cain suddenly grabbed Aria by her wrist and pulled her towards him.

“No, I can’t have Aria, who’s not yet an adult, alone with a man who I don’t even know who he is.”

“...?!”

Aria was quickly dragged to Cain’s side. He hid Aria behind him as if she belonged to him. The pain was so severe that her eyebrows were frowned upon by the harsh movements and the strong force that vigorously pulled her.

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Chapter 143. The Wicked Woman Comes Ashore, Part I

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

She became angry at this rude act, and one step faster than that, Asher took hold of Cain's arm as quickly as possible, which had seized Aria's wrist, and said,

"That's not up to you, is it? And now you don't even seem to realize how threatening it is to her."

Cain bit his lip and loosened the force he gave to his hand when he saw that Aria's wrist was losing color.

Aria, who pulled out her captured hand, stepped back a few steps. She then told Cain with a wary stare. "I just want you to go back. I'm going to go back... with Mr. Pinonua. I want you to take care of poor Mielle and be by her side."

Aria turned away after leaving such cold words. Aria got out of the way, holding the arms of Asher, who was a little embarrassed by what she called him—Mr. Pinonua. Cain's angry eyes followed the image of Aria and Asher as they disappeared.

Aria, who had remained silent long after passing the appointed place and continued walking through the corridor, did not stop. Asher looked at her and said, "Mr. Pinonua...? Are you talking about me?"

Then Aria, who had stopped walking, looked at him and said, "Yes, weren't you Pinonua Louie?"

"You still remember that name?"

Asher slightly smiled. He seemed to think he had met Aria only once under that name, but in fact, she was the Investor A, so she exchanged letters with Asher under the pseudonym of Pinonua Louie over and over again.

But she knew the whole situation, so she didn't mean to blame it. She just wanted a way to avoid it. In front of Cain, he couldn't identify himself as the Crown Prince. Moreover, it was Aria's turn to hide her identity. She then changed the topic.

"But why did you come here?"

"I was worried about you."

Asher was really worried about her.

"I've met the judge before, and she knew my identity, so I couldn't go to court, so I've been waiting outside. If you come to court, you'll face the real culprit."

The real culprit. When he found out that Berry had been released safely, he did not ask questions about it. Rather, he was worried.

Perhaps that was why questions that had been hovering around her head had become bigger and more unstable. 'Does he really know who I am? Why is he treating me so tenderly? How long can I see him while hiding my inner thoughts?'

"Mr. Asher... I think you don't know me that much."

He replied, noting the meaningful answer.

"Then you can tell me from now on."

The honest, straight answer and glance meant that he would accept whatever real intention she might be hiding.

"... Even if I'm actually a terrible, gossip-like wicked woman?"

"I'm not the same on the outside. No, I don't know if such a person exists in the world."

He added that he was also the original character when he had first seen Aria in the general store. Aria's eyes shook as she recalled the cold, blunt and rough figure she had seen. In addition, the image of many people, who had been different on the outside and on the inside, also came to mind. 'Isn't Emma the one who will disappear through execution?'

As a sudden realization struck Aria, she lost her mind in silence. He recalled his encounter with her in the general store and hurriedly added an excuse, worried that she might be scared

"Of course, I'm the one that I'm showing you. I think that any shape I made is myself. It's just different depending on time and place."

Aria gazed hard at Asher, who continued to talk. The anxiety and doubt that stood in her eyes suddenly disappeared. It might sound like he didn't know the truth, but that was enough comforting, and it was also the answer she most wanted.

After making excuses, Asher, who had been staring at Aria's eyes long before her anxiety and doubt disappeared, handed over her hair.

"On the other hand, I hope you will be what you're rumored to be... I think there's too much junk around you."

Aria's face glowed with deep emotion in his eyes. At the same time, Aria, who understood what he was referring to, made an excuse for misunderstanding.

"As you know, he's just a brother to me. He's family."

"That's not all I'm saying."

He didn't seem to like Aria's occasional appearance at a gathering of people, drawing people's attention.

Aria, who had no idea what he was thinking about because of his vague words, tried hard to figure it out. "I think it's better for you to go back now," Asher said as he watched Aria with a soft look.

"I'd love to talk about this and that..."

Asher swallowed his following words. But even if he didn't say it, Aria nodded calmly because she knew in the letter how busy he was with the establishment of the new academy.

“Then, I hope to see you again soon.”

Asher would always kiss the back of her hand before he set off. Leaving behind the regret of a brief encounter that ended with a dripping lip from the back of her hand, she went back to the mansion in a carriage prepared by Asher.

* * *

Mielle, who was unconscious while Aria hoped she approached closer to her death in each passing day, came to her senses while being taken to the hospital, and, thanks to that, she had been resting in the mansion. The doctor said Mielle had a temporary breathing problem due to the shock and advised her to relax for a while.

But if she had intended to save her by taking advantage of the little time left before Emma’s execution, Mielle led her weak body and forced her to go out several times. She didn’t even know what others thought of her for her excessive behavior.

‘It’s already too late.’

After finally seeing Emma’s end with that beautiful green eyes without finding any way, Mielle began to spend the day dazed as if she were out of her mind.

There was no more Mielle, who had always won the yearning and respect of the maids with her elegant gestures and sparkling eyes. Emma’s absence, who had protected Mielle from the day she was born, was enough to make her a soulless empty shell. Mielle’s actions were enough to make her maids nervous.

“My God, how many hours has she been standing there?”

At Aria's question, the maids waiting in front of Mielle's room shook their heads in astonishment. Mielle must have locked the door, so they couldn't even clean it.

Next to them was a maid with a light meal. She was a close aide of Mielle's but still unable to take a step into her room, and her eyes were flushed.

'Is there a better chance?'

Aria recommended warm tea for the girls, who were having a hard time.

"... Tea?"

"It's because you look exhausted. I think you should take a break."

"Ah..."

There was something they needed to do, and they showed a sign of trouble. Mielle neither allowed nor refused, so they had to wait for an answer all the time.

'Besides, drinking tea with their master?' It was rumored that Annie and Jessie were doing so, but it was a far-away world from those who had always worked as Mielle's maids. When they hesitated, Aria stretched out her hand of temptation again.

"If anyone asks, I will say that I had something to do and called you, so you should all take some rest."

Aria was so friendly to them that the impressed maids' cheeks blushed. Soon, her reputation began to change little by little as the stories of those who had favored Aria spread in the mansion. Before that, Emma's vacancy was the biggest that overwhelmed and led them.

So Mielle's close aides gradually turned their minds to sweet temptation as the poison spread little by little. Inside the mansion, the flow was quietly changing, so no one had noticed it yet.

"... Well, do you really want to give this to us?"

The maids asked one by one, holding some cosmetics in their hands that added color to their lips. As Annie nodded triumphantly on Aria's behalf, the maids screamed a little and immediately opened the lid of the cosmetics to identify the scent and color.

"Oh my God, this precious thing..."

Aria, who smiled benevolently at the admiring girls, took a sip of her tea. She didn't buy it to give it to them. One of the businessmen, who she had invested in as Investor A, had just sent a large quantity of this and that, saying that they were cosmetics he made.

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Chapter 144. The Wicked Woman Comes Ashore, Part II

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

She didn't know if there was a word made by Baron Burboom, but the gifts were things that all women would like.

Other eye-catching cosmetics, perfumes, and luxurious pouches were displayed as if they were displayed within the eyes of the maids. Situated in tens of units instead of one or two, they were enough to arouse the attention and greed of the maids.

"Miss, I have a question... why on earth did you buy so many of these precious things?"

When a curious maid asked her so, Annie answered instead of Aria as if she were foolish.

"Do you think Miss Aria bought those? It's natural that she got a gift. That's how difficult it is to deal with."

"Ah...!"

As Annie said, some of the items were sent by men who really liked her, but most of those who had the same kind in large quantities were gifts. Annie knew it all but added a bluff as she wanted to make her master look good.

Aria looked at Annie with a satisfied smile. All the gold and silver coins she had invested in Annie had been so desirable. Of course, it was true that she had received the gift, so she didn't lie.

The maids looked at Aria enjoying tea with their eyes glistening. The look was not just about respect for the elegant, prestigious noblewoman. There were envy and longing for the woman who overcame her humble origin, which could be seen as much lower than them, and who charmed the men of the Empire with her beautiful appearance and fine character. And...

"Miss Aria often takes care of these things by giving them to her maids. This many is just too much for her."

There also existed jealousy for Annie, who transformed her form from a naughty girl to an elegant woman in just a year. There had come out some words at first as she had betrayed Mielle and had been attached to Aria, but in the end, the winner was her. Wasn't she enjoying life as much as a noblewoman?

And now she might really be elevated to aristocracy. It was because there were rumors among the public that she was meeting with the successful Baron Burboom because of Aria's help. So how could they not be envious?

It was enough to turn her maids' eyes, thanks to Mielle, who had yet to wake up because of the shock of losing Emma. They all wanted to be like Annie and like Aria.

“Oh, come to think of it, Miss Mielle took a walk in the garden this morning for a while. Within that time, we were able to clean her room.”

“That’s right. I accompanied her. She still couldn’t talk, but she seemed a little refreshed. Maybe it’s because of the letter.”

“Letter?”

“Yes. She got a letter from the princess. It’s been a long time since the incident. As soon as I told her that she had a letter from the princess, she told me to go in her room right away. I was surprised.”

The maids, who were quick to understand, released the information to Aria. They seemed to realize that Annie had acted like that and had enjoyed a rich life—by selling her master, Mielle.

“Really? That’s great.”

Aria replied with great joy. She did not come out of the room with all the efforts of the Count who loved her but took a walk in a letter from the princess.

‘Don’t tell me anything about Oscar... Or if he is going to visit.’

That was all she could think of. Oscar was the only one she loved. Her love for him overshadowed her love for Emma.

‘I know it was the best thing to charm Oscar as expected.’

But after many efforts, it was over, and somehow the face of Asher came to mind, who put himself at the edge of a knife even against Cain, her brother. She had been embarrassed at the time, but it wasn't a bad mood to think about it again. No, rather... She felt a bit of pleasure, thinking about it...

Aria did not hide her smile from the feelings and information about Mielle the maids told her, and a very small gift was given to the maids.

"I'll ask you well in the future. I want to help the poor Mielle, but unfortunately, I have dark ears."

" Yes, Yes! Miss! "

When they realized that the power of wealth in their hands was greater than the satisfaction of having a proud master, they came to Aria every day.

* * *

"Wait."

"... Yes?"

Cain called Annie who had just come back. She was heading to Aria's room with letters from young businessmen. Annie took something in her bosom, and he took it strange to see her smiling as if she were in a good mood. Cain asked Annie,

"Why are you carrying so much?"

"Yes...?"

It wasn't such a surprising question, but Cain frowned at the excessive response of Annie.

"Don't tell me, it's Mr. Pinonua."

Pinonua? Annie cocked her head to the unexpected name. 'Why did the name of Pinonua Louie suddenly come out?' He was just one of many businessmen. Cain, who read Annie's expression, asked again, feeling a little relieved.

"Is there anyone else?"

"It's... it's personal..."

Even so, when Aria was hiding it from the outside, she was perplexed again, and Cain, who was considering something, asked again, "Did you meet with that young Baron?"

Annie nodded quickly at his wrong assumption. Rather than making lame excuses, it was better to affirm as he misunderstood. Then Cain, who returned with an expressionless face, said, "Go now."

"Yes, yes..."

"Oh, by the way."

She thought his questioning was over, but Cain called Annie again. The startled Annie jumped up and turned her stiff head, and Cain asked again about Pinonua,

"How often does that Pinonua meet with Aria?"

"... Mr. Pinonua? I don't know. I don't think she's ever seen him..."

When she answered there, Cain released Annie, and she hurried to Aria's room. Aria asked why as Annie walked in with a short breath.

"Well, Mr. Cain asked something strange."

"... What?"

"Mr. Pinonua. He asked me if you are seeing him often. I don't know why he's wondering... he asked me if the letter I brought was from him."

Aria frowned at her answer. Since the day of his encounter with Asher, he had only a strange look in his eyes, but she was worried as he would not question her otherwise, but he seemed to have asked the maids, not Aria.

'What should I do?'

It was impossible to reveal the true identity of Asher. It wasn't because he was the Crown Prince. 'Isn't he the Crown Prince who broke up the Aristocratic Party one by one, and let the princess clench her teeth and darkened the Count's face?'

She read the letters Annie brought in agony. As usual, there was a list of new businessmen who wanted to report and recommend a business. After reading them carefully, she got her hands on the last letter. It was a letter from Asher, which came in having the name of Pinonua Louie.

[I think we'll be ready soon. May I ask you a favor in response?]

Aria's eyes shook after reading the passage. He was asking her to show up for completion. 'Is it really okay to reveal myself now?' She thought she needed to be more careful.

‘Can I deal with Mielle and the princess behind her even if I reveal who I am?’ What he said suddenly came to her mind.

‘He said he wanted to have me near. I think it’s possible if I use Asher.’

Somehow she felt uncomfortable. She could not make up her mind about using him, like Oscar, even though she knew he liked her. It was a strange feeling for Aria, but Aria’s troubles had been ruined by Cain’s remarks.

“The Pinonua family isn’t fit for Aria.”

The Count and Countess, who were eating, opened their eyes and asked why since he suddenly mentioned the Pinonua family. Aria also blinked with embarrassment. She didn’t know he would say it in a place like this.

“The man Aria is meeting.”

“Is Aria meeting Pinonua?”

The attention to Cain went back to Aria. After a long period of time, she pretended to be in better shape and attended dinner and suddenly she was faced with this situation.

He seemed to have worked hard to investigate the family of Viscount Pinonua, and Cain said, “Aria should not meet with him,” citing several reasons.

“Aria, Aria. Are you really meeting Pinonua? Where on earth did you first meet him?”

The Countess, embarrassed by that, stammered and asked. The Count also stared at Aria with crumpled eyebrows as he realized that she did not have to meet the nobleman in the periphery, who proved her worth more than she had in the past.

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Chapter 145. The Wicked Woman Comes Ashore, Part III

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

Aria, who was wondering what to say in this situation where everyone had a variety of misunderstandings, soon gave a vague answer that was neither negative nor positive.

“... He’s just a friend to me.”

“Oh my gosh...”

The Countess’ upper body staggered while she held her head with her hands. The Count also showed signs of discomfort by shaking his head as if he was not happy with it.

“Hmm... I think you’d better reconsider, Aria.”

Aria replied with an innocent face, “He’s just a friend, so don’t worry. I don’t see him that often. I’m not interested in that yet.”

“I’m glad to hear that, but... Well, maybe it’s time to find the right person for Aria anyway.”

When the Count said so, the Countess was also positive and relieved, and suddenly, Cain was angry, saying, "That's ridiculous."

"Aria... is still young."

Mielle had her mate since she was a lot younger. Cain also added as if he had realized that he had been talking nonsense and that she needed to be careful.

'It's dirty...'

'Although he has no blood relation to her, how can he take such an attitude toward his sister who became a family member?' It was true that she had used him, but she had never imagined that he would fall into such an ugly way.

'I'm saying... that the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. Isn't he the same man as his father, who gave up his wife's seat to a prostitute despite everyone's opposition because of her appearance?'

The Count stared at Cain as if he was strange because he expressed feelings that were not seen to Mielle.

The wise Countess, like Aria, glanced at Cain with contempt. Cain was in a hurry to eat, saving his words as if he was quite embarrassed by his feeling of going wild.

'I can't help it now that the Count reacts like this.'

Aria decided to move on, putting an end to what she had been thinking about.

* * *

Since then, the Count had tried to find a mate with all his personal connections. It would be hard to match the family of the Duke, but it seemed to find a family with both power and money. He didn't even know it was pointless.

As the Countess enthusiastically joined the effort, rumors quickly spread over the empire that the Roscent family's beautiful eldest daughter was looking for a mate. Because of this, Aria's mood became uncomfortable day by day.

"Are you really going to marry a man the Count picks?" asked Annie, who knew Aria's true self. Now that the Marquis of Vincent and Oscar had found their mate, they knew that any of the empire's nobles would not be enough for Aria. Aria frowned and laid down the book she had been reading.

"Are you going to bother me, too?"

"Oh, no, it's not... I don't think there's anyone in this empire who would suit you..."

Annie, who cringed, dodged her gaze. It might be an impure intention, but nothing had yet progressed as Cain rejected himself.

However, at this rate, she would have to spend her precious time meeting useless men, and she was annoyed. It was something that she might even have to be engaged in.

'Do I have to use Asher, too...?'

She thought so uncomfortably, but as rumors seemed to have spread, even Rain, who had stopped visiting, came to the mansion with a gift.

"Well, thank you for the other day. But what brings you here today?"

The Count, who had previously told her to meet with him, watched them like a hawk to see if he was interested in Aria. Soon after, however, he softened his face and welcomed Lane, when he made an excuse that there was a woman who promised a future.

“Are you really looking for a marriage partner like this?”

Lane asked Aria, avoiding the Count’s eyes. The contents of the cup that Aria was holding shook slightly. Realizing that she felt very uncomfortable, Lane murmured, “Thank God,” and hurried to give her the letter he had hidden.

“He’s worried.”

She could tell without asking who it was. It must have been sent by Asher. He was so busy, but he was so attentive to the rumors that he even sent the letter through Lane, and she felt a little bit relieved from it. Lane spoke when he saw Aria’s face, which was a little loosened,

“Hmm. I don’t know what you’re thinking, but I personally think that you’re a perfect fit for the most powerful person in the empire.”

“Your flattery is amazing. He’s not here.”

Aria’s sarcastically responding mouth was slightly raised. And when Cain, who had been watching their conversation for a long time, saw Aria’s mouth gently rising, he argued to Lane with a frown.

“Pino? I’ve never heard of the family before.”

“It would be impossible for you to know every family in the world.”

Lane narrowed his eyes and scanned Cain, who was provoking him childishly. He could refute it very lightly because he had been minced under Asher for many years.

“... There are a lot of families I don't need to know.”

“Haha, that's what it is. However, it may be quite upsetting that all your family members know and trust except you alone. You may feel alienated.”

Cain, who felt attacked, clenched his teeth and tried to hide his mounting anger. He seemed to be looking for words to refute. However, Lane, who had already achieved his goal, left the mansion. He had no intention to deal with Cain anymore.

Aria also hurried up to her room before anything started to happen. Cain's eyes were lewd after her. Even Annie and Jessie noticed that they could shrink.

“... Mielle?”

As she was going up to the third floor, she came across Mielle, who was coming down the stairs and was dressed nicely. Aria had heard that Mielle went for a walk once in a while, but now she seemed to be able to go out.

Her rough face had returned to normal, and Her fine face was similar to the one before 'the incident.' She could tell where she was going without asking. It was clear that her destination would be the Duke's mansion since she was beautifully dressed.

‘Will you be comforted by Oscar?’

Aria called her, but there was no answer from Mielle.

“...”

Moreover, a sharp, cold look, which she had never seen in her life, slowly swept through Aria from head to toe. It was the face of a wicked woman, who was so cheerful that she wanted to scream in a bad mood.

“You look like you’re going out, aren’t you? Come back in time. Something terrible has happened recently.”

‘You know, like that scary thing you’ve been up to.’

“ ... ”

A few people saw her, and even though she didn’t have to, Aria deliberately mimicked as the more plausible, elder sister, and Mielle said, “You killed Emma,” and soon turned her head and went downstairs.

“Oh, my God... why would Miss Mielle act like that? Is there something wrong with her?”

“I don’t know, but I think she’s not sick anymore...”

Annie and Jessie swept their arms as if they had gotten goosebumps.

‘Isn’t it a very desirable change? I hope you’ll behave yourself in front of everyone.’ Aria went back to her room with a bright smile.

“Miss, was the letter... given to you by Mr. Lane? Why did Mr. Lane secretly give you a letter?”

As she came back to her room and took out the letter, Annie asked Aria with her eyes wide opened and groped.

“He just delivered it to me.”

Her casual reply was quite relaxed after a long time, so the quick-witted Annie covered her mouth, saying, ‘no way,’ when she said Lane had delivered it, Annie thought Aria might be exchanging letters with his master. Aria, who made no other excuses because it was true, confirmed the letter from Asher.

“... This.”

Aria, who saw what was in the envelope, opened her eyes wide. There was a thin ring inside. The ring with sparkling diamonds and the unknown fine print engraved wasn’t fancy but delicate.

Aria carefully put the ring on her finger and read the contents. She felt different from the usual letter which contained useless words as if he wanted to say something but couldn’t do so.

Still, she slowly read the contents but didn’t miss a single letter, but she was forced to hold her breath while she was amazed by the tough handwriting written at the end.

[I hope you don’t forget me because I’m busy.]

He continued to use an indirect tone, but it seemed to be what he really wanted to tell her.

“Oh my go,” Aria said.

Her face turned red in response to his childlike behavior. She wanted to reply; she really wanted to, but since Lane had already left, she just read the letter a few more times and kept it in her drawer.

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Chapter 146. The Wicked Woman Comes Ashore, Part IV

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

Shortly thereafter, rumors circulated that the Crown Prince separated himself completely from the Aristocratic Party. It was rumored that he condemned the deep-rooted corruption of the Aristocratic Party and declared that he would clean it up.

That was why the number of nobles who spared themselves was increasing, and the Count, who had not otherwise sinned but also the main figure of the Aristocratic Party, stayed in the mansion, forgetting to find a mate for Aria. It was an exquisite timing as if to relieve her anxiety. Thanks to that, Aria was relieved.

“I think you should follow the princess to the end. She said she had other plans.”

Mielle, who was recovering at some point and was beginning to move in and out of the Duke’s mansion, told the Count who was in agony. It was the first dinner she had attended in a long time. Unlike before, her subdued eyes allowed Aria to guess her change.

“Well, I’ve already been offered a proposal to unite the innocent nobles.”

However, the Count was skeptical. Not only that, but most of the nobles who did not commit any crime were the same. He meant that there was no need to get involved. It was because there were already many examples of breaking up and bankruptcy.

In addition, the princess had been praised more than anyone else as a tool to subdue the Crown Prince, and now that she could not perform her role, it was wise to leave the sinking ship. The division of the Aristocratic Party accelerated as the Duke was about to give up trying to use her.

“... Father!”

Mielle raised her voice to call the Count, but the Count just ignored her and kept sipping his wine. He was a perfect example of a nobleman who could abandon his companion in order to keep his power, so he kept his mouth shut and continued to eat.

“Mielle, your father is in trouble.”

Aria said soothingly on behalf of the Countess. Mielle responded to Aria, looking askance at her,

“You’re saying that because you don’t know anything.”

The Count and Countess were surprised because of her strange reaction. They looked at Mielle with their eyes wide opened. It was a reply that Aria hoped and expected.

Miele, who she had encountered once in a while, suddenly revealed her thorns and let out her poison. She seemed to realize that nothing could be achieved by pretending to be nice. But it wouldn’t change. Aria smiled awkwardly with a pretty hurt face.

“Ah... is that so? I think I was being presumptuous. I was just saying that you better obey your father’s wishes for the peace of the family...”

“... Mielle, I think you’d better stop talking about this like Aria says.”

In rare cases, the Count sided with Aria. Mielle was nervous and Aria was apologetic. It looked as if the two were in a twist. The servants and maids, who had been waiting on, were of the same mind. After Emma’s incident, they thought Mielle had gotten weird, and they gossiped.

“Mielle, I think our father will make a wise choice enough.”

Cain, who was listening quietly, also refused to take Mielle’s side. In the end, the isolated Mielle left the dining room without even half emptying her long-awaited dinner.

Stuck in her room and crying her eyes out, she headed straight to the Duke’s mansion the next day at the break of dawn. The princess, who knew Mielle was in a bad shape, urged Oscar to please her.

“How could they...? How could they do that? I got a ring from Oscar...”

What she worried about most was Oscar’s future. Oscar comforted Mielle, who was crying.

“Don’t worry so much. Probably we can change the public’s opinion very soon.”

“Do you mean the princess is preparing?” Mielle blinked her eyes and asked.

Oscar nodded and affirmed, “Yes. You can hear good news soon. Then we can convince the Count again. We can also gather the scattered Aristocratic Party again.”

When Mielle heard the explanation, she took out her handkerchief. She wiped off her fine eyes and straightened her face.

“... I’m sorry. It seems like I was a little nervous these days because a lot of bad things just keeps on happening.”

Oscar’s expression dimmed subtly at the words ‘bad things’. He must have remembered what had happened to Aria not long ago, and the fact that it had a lot to do with his sister. Of course, this little girl in front of him was too.

“You must be worried sick. You’d better have some warm tea and make yourself feel at home.”

He tried his best not to go against her mood. He could only do what his sister told him to do. He had no choice since he was lacking experience and the connections. His only option was to carry favors for her as if he was dead or to sharpen his sword for the sake of the occasion.

He blamed himself for being so bad that he was named the successor to the Duke family, and he ordered his waiting servant to change her tea.

“Thank you very much, Mr. Oscar.”

Mielle nodded with a blush at his tender affection. She was able to recover her happiness because he was nice to her in each passing day, and she was able to escape the pain of losing Emma.

She already realized that it wasn’t because he purely liked her, but it was somehow good. There was nothing more she could wish for other than Oscar being around her.

* * *

A few days later, the Duke sent a letter to the Count, not Mielle. It was a letter that arrived secretly at dawn, avoiding the public's attention. After reading the letter that arrived from the Duke's family, the Count had been in serious trouble for some time looking for information. He had also met frequently with other acquainted aristocrats.

Sometimes they would visit the mansion of the Count, but they took Cain quietly to the lounge without even giving a formal greeting for what was so much to hide.

'What the hell is going on?'

Aria, suspicious of this, was standing on the first floor just in time for their return. It was already late at night when the Count and some aristocrats, who had come as guests and who had never thought there would be anyone else with them, tried to hide their astonished faces and avoided her gaze.

"Aria, what are you doing here at this hour?"

Cain, who followed the Count, also hurried to Aria's side in astonishment. He spread his clothes over Aria's rather light-looking interior suit and said, "Go upstairs quickly."

"I heard we had guests, but I'm sorry I didn't even say hello. But I think it was wrong for me to meet them like this... I'm sorry."

When she said that it was not intentional, the afflicted cleared their throats loudly and denied it. One of the nobles said, casting a disagreeable glance at Aria,

"I think it's an inevitable choice for the sake of this pretty and kind-hearted lady. If this continues..."

“... I get it, I get it. I’m on my mind, so let’s go back.”

The Count pushed the back of a young nobleman who was trying to say something. Cain and Aria were left in the hall because they went out the door together, saying, “Let’s go back now because it’s already late.”

So Aria’s gaze went to Cain. Cain had been eyeing Aria’s light interior suit since then. Then, at Aria’s gaze, he was surprised and said, “Go up.”

“I’m worried. You look busy too...”

‘Yeah, he’d know something.’ Aria, who changed her target, narrowed her distance to Cain because the Count and the nobles disappeared so quickly that she could not find any information.

“I was sad because I couldn’t see you even at dinner time.”


Far from being sad, she had been busy avoiding Cain’s eyes every time she had run into him. As she changed her posture and approached suddenly, Cain’s face heated up uncontrollably. It was an inevitable instinct.

“... There won’t be anything to worry about. Things will work out soon so make sure you do what you wanted to do. Oh, maybe you should learn a foreign language. Well, you don’t have to do it right away.”

‘Foreign language?’ Arya’s eyes frowned faintly at Cain’s advice. ‘Suddenly, a foreign language...? Are they all going to be exiled together? No matter how scattered they were by the Crown Prince’s ruse, if the remaining nobles seek asylum in other countries at once, chaos will ensue within the empire.’

But if they do that, a war would break out, and they would never go that far unless they were crazy. Unable to guess what was going to happen, she tried to get more information from Cain, but after the Count returned from seeing the nobles off, she was forced to go up to her room.

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Chapter 147. The Wicked Woman Comes Ashore, Part V

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

‘What the hell are you up to?’

She thought about it, but she couldn’t find the answer so she stayed up all night and finally decided to use the hourglass, but she could find the answer the next morning.

“I decided to follow the choice of the princess.”

“Are you serious...?”

Mielle, who had a bright face for the first time in a long time; her eyes glittered all of a sudden.

‘The choice of the princess? What choice did she make?’

The Countess also stared at the Count, waiting for an explanation, not knowing the details. But the Count seemed to have no intention of explaining it further, and only ate quietly.

Aria, unable to resist her curiosity, asked, "... what choice?"

"You'll find out soon." On behalf of the Count, Mielle answered triumphantly.

The mischievous way of speaking gave Aria strength on her hands below the table. Mielle was much better in the past when she had pretended to be naive. Aria couldn't be sarcastic as she openly expressed her real intention.

'As expected, Mielle knew it.'

Since she was a close friend of the princess, she might have known what she was going to do before the Count. Mielle's sharp reply made Aria feel completely displeased, as she said Aria would know when everyone knew. Aria stared at Cain for an answer, but he also said, "I respect my father's choice."

'Yes, you don't have to explain to the stupid Countess and her daughter. What a shame!'

Aria held Cain's arm as he left the dining room, vowing and pledging not to let the Count and Cain sit still when the day came when she would judge the princess and Mielle.

"What the hell is going on, brother?"

She was going to use the hourglass if she could. Of course, she thought her pathetic expression would work more on Cain, so when she first drew it, he looked very awkward.

"It's still a little bit..."

"Every family except me and my mother knows! Don't tell me... my mother and I are not family?"

When asked, Cain said, “That can’t be! It’s just to prevent the possibility of information leaking out.”

‘In fact, you think we’re not a family. Therefore, you despise your stepmother and blush at your stepsister’s touch.’

As Aria shed tears with her increasingly somber face, Cain, who eventually succumbed, looked around, made sure no one was there and told the truth.

“I think the princess Isis is going to marry a foreign king.”

At his words, she dropped the box of the hourglass in her hand.

* * *

Aria came back to her room and covered her sick head. She thought she would have joined hands with another country, but she didn’t think that she would marry a king of another country!

‘... Will Mr. Asher be all right?’

It was the first thought if Asher would be all right. Asher was first, rather than thinking that it was difficult to get revenge. Because she couldn’t meet him easily, she tried to calm her anxiety by ruining an unused embroidered handkerchief.

‘Is the feeling that Asher felt like...? When he wants to see, he can’t meet me and he wants to keep me around.’

Worried, Aria wrote a letter and sent it to Baron Burboom, who knew her real identity, to create a chance to meet Pinonua Louie.

It would be okay to meet him at the store of Baron Burboom, under the pretext of the accidental encounter. He would not doubt otherwise as he had already seen her disappear with Asher.

So she had been waiting for his reply, but surprisingly enough, before some news arrived from him, it was the Countess who arrived with a pale face.

She also belatedly recognized the seriousness of the situation and grilled the Count to find out all the details. Deathly pale, the Countess made a proposal to Aria to go to a foreign country.

"I won't be here. You know how I caught a chance, and I can't die like this. So why don't we leave together for a while? Huh? If things don't work out, I'm willing to divorce."

Not married because she had loved the Count, she seemed willing to abandon him for her safe future. Aria gave a small nod as she thought it would be desirable because her mother didn't have anything else to protect herself.

"Mother, you'd better do that."

"Then I'll have it ready as soon as possible, so if you have anything to sort out, hurry up."

When the delighted Countess tried to turn around, Aria hastily gripped her arm.

"Wait a minute."

"... do you have anything to say? You don't mean to stay, do you? I didn't know you are that good for the Count family."

Perhaps she had no intention of abandoning her own daughter, but the Countess began to persuade Aria. Aria, who was wondering what to say, took her hand and said, "You need to be careful." And her face darkened.

"It's not going to happen that fast. The princess will get married and then something will pop up. So we need to figure out the situation. How did you achieve that, and could you give up so easily?"

Unlike the Countess, Aria, who still had a lot of work to do, had no intention of leaving the empire. Moreover, she was worried about Asher. She even thought it would be better if she could give the power she had achieved, if possible, and she would rather stick by the side of Asher, as she could use the hourglass. And most of all, there was also a need to bring down the judgment on the real wicked.

"That's..."

No matter how extreme the situation might be, when she saw the calm attitude of Aria, the Countess noticed that she made too much fuss and left Aria's room with her last words while she was touching her hair.

"... I fully understand what you mean. But in the end, you'll find it better to leave the empire."

Aria, of course, thought it would be wise to do so in order to save her life, but her mind had already tilted irrevocably in the opposite direction.

* * *

'Is it because rumors have yet to spread in the public?' Asher did not send a letter to Aria. The good news was that he sent a reply to 'Investor A'.

[I'm sorry, but I don't think I can meet you because I've been so busy lately. I'll see you on the academy's completion day.]

Aria's expression stiffened after reading the reply; that she couldn't cry or laugh several times. She was also worried that he might be busy with the work of the princess. Maybe that was why he couldn't come to see her.

'Are you really okay?'

With the completion ceremony just around the corner, she would be able to meet him soon, but she didn't realize that it was so terrible that she couldn't see him right away. Her heart was stuffy. When she saw Aria's hand touching her chest, Jessie asked her with a worried look, "What's wrong with you? Do you want me to call a doctor?"

"No, it's okay."

"But you don't look well, and you look tired."

Aria, who had been buried deep in the sofa for a while, urged Jessie to rest, closed her eyes and thought, and soon resumed her posture. Those who had put her to death in the past were said to re-enrich themselves, but she was not allowed to stand by and watch.

"Please get me a pen and a letter paper."

'Yeah. I didn't have time to worry like this. I have to go ahead as planned.' The time has come to bring all the things that had been accumulated under the table alone to the surface.

Aria sent some letters to the outside and handed out the rest to the people of the mansion, including the Countess, and they frowned and asked what this was,

“I really hope you’ll be there. It’s very important.”

“It’s... it’s not the academy the Crown Prince is involved in, right?”

The Count’s face was very ugly. To him, who could be regarded as a key figure of the Aristocratic Party, the Crown Prince was the greatest enemy of all. He could not attend such a ceremony to celebrate the Crown Prince’s new achievements.

“... I’m sorry, but I’m afraid I’ll be busy. If it’s important, I’ll get it delivered later.”

Yes, maybe it was a wise choice. If he knew before his eyes that his new daughter had helped the enemy, there would be nothing worse. Of course, it was regrettable that she invited him for it, but it was an expected response.

‘Can he stick to that attitude even after the completion ceremony?’

No matter how much she helped the Crown Prince, Aria had already built such a force that the Count’s reaction was expected in the future.

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Chapter 148. The Wicked Woman Comes Ashore, Part VI

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

“I can’t help it. I’ll tell you later.”

“Sister, you must be very free.”

Mielle, with the atmosphere on her back, said, looking suspiciously at her. The sharpness of her speech drew a moment’s attention to Mielle. The Countess had a face that she wanted to scold her.

‘You have got everything with just your natural status.’ In the past, she might have thrown a fork at her thinking so, but not anymore. Now she had the great things in her hand that stupid Mielle would never have in her life.

* * *

“What the hell are you thinking? How do you expect to attend such a place? Can’t you see everyone’s upset?” asked the Countess, who followed her into the room from the meal. She raised her voice as if she could not understand Aria’s behavior. She must have

thought Arya set a fire in this mess now.

Aria, who closed her door and looked sideways, turned to the Countess with a serious look.

“Mother, don’t worry.”

“... Aria?”

“I’m sure it’s not a bad choice.”

No, the Count’s attitude would change. Mielle would no longer be able to belittle herself.

‘Maybe she’ll try to use me as her own.’

By chance, she only cooperated with the Crown Prince, as an investor, in creating the academy, while Aria’s forces themselves remained neutral. Although the political approach had been blocked up by Baron Burboom, the situation would be different after revealing her identity.

‘Of course, I’ll take Mr. Asher’s side.’

* * *

“You’re so beautiful today, Miss. It’s been a long time since you’ve decorated yourself like this, so you look like an angel.”

Aria, who gave a glance to Jessie, who said the obvious thing, looked at her through a mirror. Prearranged dresses and ornaments for today showed off all the splendor, blending with the more brilliant Aria’s appearance, naturally melted. Mielle with elegant

beauty and Isis with clear and beautiful appearance were difficult to digest.

She had always been, but she was confident that she would not lose out to anyone as much as she looked. As Mielle with her status, she might have survived for more than twenty years in the past thanks to her born appearance.

‘If it weren’t for this weapon, I would have been murdered by Mielle before I turned twenty.’

No one would have loved a prostitute’s daughter, who had a nasty personality and nothing to catch their eye. Fortunately, however, she was born with an unparalleled appearance and now a self-made woman, so she had nothing to obstruct her.

Aria, smiling at herself satisfactorily in a mirror, took Jessie and Annie, who were as beautifully decorated as she was, to the completion ceremony of the academy she invested.

“... I still don’t understand why you’re going here.”

The Countess, who accompanied her alone, said. Her face was still covered with dark clouds. But that dark face must soon contain surprise and joy, so Aria seized her mother’s hand. Even though the Count was sure to be offended, she thanked her mother for attending this uncomfortable occasion for her daughter.

“Just wait a little while and you’ll know.”

The academy was located near the Imperial Castle, so they arrived quickly without much time to talk about it. Perhaps they wanted to show off the work of the Crown Prince, but at a glance, she could see a splendid building.

“... my god. I feel like it was part of the Imperial Castle.”

The Countess got off from the carriage was amazed. Aria also struggled to pretend to be calm because she did not see the middle course and faced only the magnificent results.

‘To have completed such a great building in a short period of time, I’m sure he’s invested enough money.’

She looked around admiringly, and there were quite a few people gathered since the start of the ceremony was not long. The aristocrats in fine dress, as well as the commoners in plain clothes, were occasionally seen.

“You’re here.”

Maybe he was waiting, but the Baron of Burboom who found Aria hurried to meet her. When he saw the breathtaking Aria, he could not speak for a moment, but soon came to his senses and introduced himself, and escorted the two. The Countess, who had never dreamed that Aria would have built a personal network outside, asked her, covering her mouth with a fan,

“Who is it?”

“I’ve known him because of my business.”

It wasn’t just the countess who was surprised by her answer. Baron Burboom, who had been careful all the time, was surprised to hear the word “business.”

“... business?”

“I’ve been bored and invested a little. It’s not a big investment, it’s a little bit of a hobby.”

The Countess accepted that she had invested a small amount of money in her hobby and had known the Baron of Burboom, as she said, and soon moved on with her steps. She seemed to think little of Aria because she had no expectations of her.

Annie, who knew the situation, smiled unintentionally, and Jessie, who was not familiar with it, cocked her head. Baron Burboom, who hastened to Aria, who walked ahead, asked carefully in a small voice that only she could hear,

“What are you thinking...?”

“What?”

“No, that’s...”

As he got closer, the scent of enchanting perfume came from Aria. Knowing that it was the perfume of some of the entrepreneurs, his heart pounded hard and his face blushed. When the Countess, who had been watching this, she gave him a warning by folding her fan loudly.

“Mr. Baron, our Aria is still young.”

She didn’t like to see him, as Baron dashed to Aria. Annie’s eyes also turned fierce. So Baron Burboom tried to make an excuse, but it was thwarted by a woman named Aria.

“Aria!”

“Sarah? Even the Marquis...!”

She thought they would be busy and couldn’t come, but Sarah, who had received the letter, attended and greeted Aria with a bright smile,

"It's been a long time. Are you feeling better now?"

"Yes, thank you for taking the time when you are busy."

The shy smile of Aria, who answered so, made Sarah stroke her soft hair a few times. It was a careful touch as if she was dealing with a precious child.

"I'm glad I had time. The Marquis said he was curious about it, so we came together."

'Sarah must be worried.'

After greeting the Countess gently, they followed the instructions of the Baron of Burboom. The large hall, built next to the main hall, was occupied in advance by nobles who had ties to the Crown Prince.

When they saw the Marquis of Vincent first, their eyes widened, and then they opened their mouths to see Aria sitting behind them. It was the same for those who knew or who didn't know who she was.

They looked puzzled as to how to respond to her excessive beauty. Then they realized that their gaze was disrespectful, and turned their heads as if to look away.

"Lady Sarah is always full of grace."

"That's too much, ma'am. Madam is still beautiful and I'm afraid I'll be compared."

Unlike the simple engagement she had held earlier this year, the Countess did not hesitate to praise Aria's lovely friend, who would be formally married next year and become the Marquise.

Leaving them behind, Aria found traces of Asher. He said he'd pass all the accomplishments over, but the letter said he'd meet her today, so he must have arrived.

But as the wait was getting longer and the ceremony was about to begin, Asher did not show up. Baron Burboom was also nervous, questioning him for not appearing,

"We are in big trouble. Pinonua Louie was going to make the opening speech."

Neither Aria nor Asher were able to identify themselves, so the face of Burboom, who had prepared for the ceremony, turned blue instead.

'Don't tell me, the real Pinonua Louie is showing up.'

At that time, Aria was also about to become nervous as she thought it would not be possible but he did not show up.

"Oh? He's here!"

From somewhere Asher showed up, he strolled up the stairs. Baron Burboom, who managed to sweep his chest out of concern, shrugged his head and blurted his end of his speech, as if he realized he was different.

"But why is he dressed up like that...?"

It was an unusual suit, embroidered in gold, white suits. The brooch on his chest was a royal seal with tulips as its source. It could not be worn by anyone other than the royal family. Burboom's expression at the sight of it turned sour.

"Miss! That's the one I saw last time at the baron's shop!"

The completion ceremony began after everyone bowed to the Crown Prince's authority, and after he examined each of the faces of the VIPs and checked his force.

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Chapter 149. The Wicked Woman Comes Ashore, Part VII

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

“Thank you for coming here to celebrate the completion of the empire’s new academic institution. I’m Franz Asterope, who organized the academy today.”

When he recited his congratulatory speech, Baron Burboom staggered as if he was about to fall.

‘You said you are Pinonua Louie! That’s why I treated you like that!’

At his appearance holding hands with Aria, Burboom had made offensive remarks to the Crown Prince, and it was seen that his heart was crying, within his face.

He had yet to make an official appearance because he had yet to hold an adult ceremony, but it was right to show himself on his achievements. The quiet hall rang with the voice of Asher,

“The academy, built in the capital city, will do its best to enhance the academic abilities of ordinary people, not aristocrats, and to secure the talent of business people, specifically...”

When he explained the purpose and direction of the academy's establishment, the participants' eyes were wide open. It was the first time for them to hear a proper explanation, though they had heard it roughly through the rumors.

As usual, those who thought it was an institution for the nobility began to talk quietly, asking, "Is that really possible?" As soon as he finished his explanation, Asher looked through the VIP hall once more, and after a very short period of silence, he mentioned Investor A.

"Of course, it was possible because there was a person who had been willing to invest."

He apparently thought that Investor A did not attend the meeting because there was no new face among those that were present. At the end of the remark, there was silence in the hall. While Investor A should appear in line with this timing, no one had risen from their seats.

Baron Burboom was even more shocked after knowing Asher's identity. Don't tell me, Aria was coming out. He didn't look so good that it wouldn't be strange to feel drowsy right away. Aria rose from her seat quietly, meeting the gaze of the Baron of Burboom.

"... Aria?"

The Countess sitting next to her called her name. As she was sitting close to the podium, Asher's eyes were naturally directed to her. Meeting his questioning gaze, Aria slowly climbed the stairs next to the podium.

"... Lady Aria?"

Aria, who suddenly rose to the top of the podium, was called carefully by Asher, questioning her name. Aria, who had a pompous look like a tall flower blooming on a cliff, held her dress with one hand and slowly bent her knees to pay tribute to the Crown Prince.

Aria greeted Asher with a clear voice, who had a fine frown upon his inability to grasp her intentions.

“Thank you for ‘inviting’ me to a noble place, Your Highness the Crown Prince.”

‘Don’t tell me...!’

Though he thought it was a ridiculous assumption, he stared at Aria with astonished eyes.

“Invitation? What...?”

As he retorted back, blurry at the end of his speech, Aria added a little advice to him,

“Everybody’s looking, Your Highness.”

Feeling unusual, Annie, who recognized him, also called Aria’s name in a deadly pale face. He went up to the podium to see if the investor was present and glanced over the VIP hall for a while.

“...!”

Unexpectedly, Asher met her eyes and opened his eyes as if he was wondering, and he was convinced that she had attended to meet him, and then smiled at her.

As Asher ascended to the podium, his aides who recognized him stood up and took a courtesy. Those who didn't know the reason also inferred his identity from his dress and created polite posture.

"You said the Crown Prince invested in this academy, and he must be the one...!"

The Countess took a courtesy in admiration. No matter how bad he was with the Aristocratic Party, the royal family was in awe. Unlike the Count, it was due to her lack of interest in factional strife.

Although the distance was a bit far away, any further indication of embarrassment must have made everyone aware. At Aria's pointing out, Asher finally regained his original look.

However, he did not give any instructions or make any statements to Aria, who bent her knees to take an uncomfortable position, if he still seemed to be smeared with shock. In the end, she had no choice but to point out again his behavior of staring at her in silence.

"My leg hurts."

"... you can stand up."

Aria, who stood straight at Asher's permission and had her back upright, blinking her long, rich eyelashes, asked calmly as if nothing special had happened,

"May I speak on your behalf, Your Highness?"

'You were so eager to find out who I was, but you kept your identity hidden.'

Obviously, if he were his usual self, he would immediately feel betrayed and angry toward his opponent. But he didn't take any of that feeling toward her, and Asher sighed inwardly.

To Aria, with a strange but beautiful smile, he replaced the answer with a small nod of his head, and slowly stepped back from the podium to make room for Aria.

There was still a mixture of complex emotions in the gaze of Asher, who followed her in impeccable graceful movements. Checking with his own eyes, he seemed not to reach yet a reality that Aria was the Investor A. And it was not only Asher who was surprised.

"Why did Aria on earth...?"

Even though it was not the place for her daughter to stand, she took the place in an imposing manner, and therefore, the Countess raised herself up quickly. She was about to run up the stage and drag her down. Annie shook his head in front of the Countess.

"Miss Aria is the right woman who can stand there."

Her face was full of respect and joy. It was a different emotion that had admired and yearned Mielle. It was not a vague yearning for the woman who wielded what she had from the beginning, but a reverence for the woman who held the glory built in her hand.

The Countess's wandering hands were left bewildered and getting emotionally carried away.

'What the hell is this?'

"Aria..."

On the other hand, Sarah's voice, full of questions and worries, came out, and at the same time Aria, who stood on the stage, greeted the audience politely. The graceful figure was admired by the beholders.

The half-fallen Baron of Burboom stared at the podium, leaning against his chair. He seemed to have almost given up now, having been running on a wild foot to hide her identity.

"I'm Roscent Aria, who was introduced. It's known as Investor A in public."

She heard a small scream somewhere. Aria, who had intended to give everyone time to admire and marvel, paused, and turned to the source of the sound.

'Oh, that's the lady I met at the meeting.'

Near the VIP seats were people who had been invested by Aria. Already seeing Aria's face, they looked dazed, as if they had never thought she would be the Investor A. There were people who forgot the time and place and pointed fingers at her. She was sure they were talking that they couldn't believe because she was a wicked woman of gossip.

Aria continued with the pleasant sight in her eyes, "I'm happy to invest in such a meaningful business. I would like to express my gratitude to the Crown Prince for reaching out his hand first."

Aria bowed her head again and thanked Asher, who stared at her from a little distance. Looking at her back, Asher, who had arranged his complicated feelings, touched his heart and offered her the utmost respect. The natural response made viewers wonder if they were on the same side.

“At first, I thought about it a lot, but I also decided to invest because I wanted to help the weak. If there’s any business that could help anyone in the future, I’d like to actively review it.”

However, he soon smiled at Aria, who drew the line, citing other reasons than the Crown Prince.

“I hope to find a number of talented people through this academy, and I will be very supportive.”

Aria, smiling brightly, was not a wicked woman of gossip, but an angel who came down to the empire. The beautiful sight of it, which seemed to really save the weak, captivated the foolish people.

When Aria, who enjoyed the gaze for such a moment, said goodbye again with a feathery, light gesture, and the sound of applause poured into the hall, where the silence had been for a moment.

Aria, who received awe and respect on one body, glanced and identified Asher. He was watching Aria with a complicated look, who instantly changed her image by putting on a credible showmanship at an important moment.

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Chapter 150. The Wicked Woman Comes Ashore, Part VIII

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

“Aria!”

As soon as Aria came down from the podium, the Countess, who rose from her seat, came up to her with a puff. If she waited a little while, she would go back to her place, but she couldn’t bear it, and it was a quick step. It was still a face that did not understand what had happened to Aria.

“What the hell is this...?”

“Mother.”

Aria, who quickly grabbed her hand trying to raise her voice even though the ceremony was not yet over, smiled softly and hurried back to her seat.

“I’ll sit down and explain.”

When she returned to her seat with the Countess, she saw Sarah and Vincent, who had become more contemplative. They gave Aria an immediate look, asking for an explanation.

“Why don’t you enjoy the ceremony first? I think the VIP seat is getting more attention than the podium.”

As Aria said, the audience’s eyes were on Aria rather than the host on the podium explaining the next sequence. The Crown Prince, who they dared not to even face him, was at the backseat.

It must have been a shock that the empire’s star-studded investor was the wicked woman of the rumor. If she continued the conversation as it was, it would be rumored in public.

“... you’ll have to explain it properly when the ceremony is over.”

The Countess said, looking askance at her.

“Of course.”

Of course, it was necessary to explain it, as she would get busy in earnest. In the following ceremony, they were calling out a list of students who had already been selected for admission or those who had been selected for the scholarship.

After it, she turned to the place where Asher was. He was also coming down the stage after the opening ceremony was over.

‘What shall Asher say?’

She wondered if he was angry about why she cheated. 'Will he be surprised by the fact that I am the very Investor A? Or is he pretending not to know? It's not like running straight this way?'

Whenever he took a step forward, her heart was pounding and various thoughts were covered in her head, and his aide, who was waiting under the platform, whispered something quietly to him so that others couldn't hear.

"..."

As if it were a serious story, Asher soon nodded and left the hall with him. 'Did something happen?' She was worried, but she couldn't see him until the ceremony was over.

—

Contrary to Aria's efforts to avoid eye contact by stopping the conversation, their eyes towards her did not scatter until the ceremony was over.

"You'd better go outside." The Marquess of Vincent said, wrapping Sarah's shoulders to protect her.

They didn't stick to her or asked if she was really the Investor A, but they were constantly observing to examine her between rumors and reality.

'Is that beautiful lady the wicked woman of rumors? She's so different from the rumors. Furthermore, I can't believe that the wicked woman is the investor that has contributed to the business of the academy, so she's not going to invest in the business that can't guarantee profits unless she is an angel!'

'Are all the rumors ever so far the slanders? ... Come to think of it, where did the rumors come from?'

They corrected the rumors, and she savored the voices that raised doubts and took her light steps. The crowd, who were greatly shocked, steadily caught up with a deep meaning that was contained in each step.

"... We'd better get out of here quickly."

The Countess took a quick step, conscious of her surroundings. She felt like she was going to die under the eyes of people before she could question her daughter about the enormous results she had made.

Sarah and Marquis Vincent also carefully asked if they could visit the Count's mansion if they were willing to split the time and listen to Aria's explanation.

'I thought I'd have a conversation with Asher after the ceremony.'

She couldn't do that, as he had disappeared without a word of greeting. It was then that she was going to answer, of course, that they could do so.

"I'm sorry, but Lady Aria has a previous engagement with me."

"... Oh my gosh."

He, who had disappeared, appeared again from behind.

"I think I mentioned it in the letter... Isn't it?"

He urged Aria to spare her time. The Countess dropped the fan and swallowed her breath.

"I did."

Certainly, in the letters exchanged with Pinonua Louie, he had mentioned seeing her at the completion ceremony. So when she answered, he held out his hand as if he were going to escort her.

The Countess, in his polite appearance, made a fuss and urged Aria, "Oh, come on. What are you doing? The explanation won't be too late to come back later, so keep your promise first."

"Thank you, ma'am."

When she was told that the Crown Prince, the noblest status in the empire, was grateful to her, she turned pale enough that it wouldn't be strange if she collapsed right away. Jessie hastened to support the Countess.

"I'm sorry, Sarah."

"... No. Of course, you should make a prior engagement first. Please contact me when you have time. I'll be waiting. Letters are fine."

Who could stop a previous engagement with the Crown Prince? Not surprisingly, Sarah also nodded and promised to do the following, and the Marquis of Vincent who had acquaintance with Asher added a little concern,

"Lady is still a minor, so maybe it's better for a guardian to be with her."

"Thank you for your concern, but you don't have to worry about it because we've met alone several times already."

Asher, who was uncomfortable with it, responded curtly and urged Aria to hold his hand. His remarks could have prevented her from getting married, but instead of feeling bad, she had a smile on her face.

So without making any excuses in the freezing atmosphere, as if to throw cold water with the shocking remarks of Asher, Aria disappeared smoothly holding his hand, past the crowds who gathered.

“Oh, my God... my daughter was involved with the Crown Prince...”

How envious she was of Mielle’s entanglements with the Duke family. She thought she would have no other regret in her life if she would become the Marquise, but it turned out she had a meeting with the Crown Prince. She felt like she was telling someone else’s story, not her daughter, who was always berated for being vulgar.

That was not only the Countess but also all who had not known Aria’s identity before. There were also audiences who heard nonsense near them.

‘If that’s really true... is it the scandal of the century?’

Even Annie, who knew that Aria was the Investor A, didn’t know Asher’s identity, so she followed traces of Aria that had disappeared with her reddish face.

* * *

Asher took Aria to a small cottage in the forest where she had visited the previous time. No matter how much he tried to avoid people’s eyes, she was a little nervous because he led her to a dark and gloomy place, but when she turned the corner of a building, the forest appeared immediately.

Aria, who had swallowed admiration for being so strange after several experiences, was seated on the table in the mansion garden, with Asher's escort.

"... Huh?"

When she sat down, Aria wondered, and he asked her why,

"I feel like the chair and table have changed."

She remembered that the chair and table she had seen before were a little old and rugged, a little ordinary for the nobleman to use.

But now Aria's chair was very soft and comfortable, and the workmanship was beautiful, and the table was so luxurious that it could be brought to the table as an ornament. As she said, sweeping it with her hand, Asher replied casually,

"Oh, I changed it because it didn't seem right for you."

"... Did you change it because of me?"

'I only visited just one time.' As she asked and blinked her eyes, he replied as if it was natural,


"Yes, you visit again like this, and I don't know how many times you'll be here."

He smiled softly, expressing his desire to meet her before Aria's consent. Of course, she wouldn't refuse when he asked her agreement, but she laughed a little, and he said something with a serious face that had happened today.

"You hid your identity."

When she had a little time to spare, the sudden, direct question that came in brought a quick, cold air in the woods, a coldness that might have made him hiccup if it hadn't been for the butler who brought the tea late. While he did not whip her with harsh words, Aria who was afflicted in her mind replied, avoiding his eyes.

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Chapter 151. The Scandal Of The Century, Part I

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

“... I just didn’t feel it was necessary. You didn’t ask me if I was an investor.”

She knew it was not an excuse, but she couldn’t stop saying it otherwise. She knew he was going to blame her for what she said. He would have felt frustrated and betrayed just as Asher had hidden his identity.

“So don’t you mind if I ask you everything I want?”

However, Asher asked her as if to confirm, instead of being angry or digging into what she had said. Aria nodded, a little embarrassed, not knowing he was paying attention to each question.

She wondered what he was asking and wondered why he was asking for permission, and as she waited for Asher, who was straining and swallowing, to ask, what Asher asked Aria was unexpected.

“How have you been?”

“... Yes?”

“I think it’s been a while, and when I found out that you were Investor A, I was afraid that you were also as busy as I was.”

‘How can I compare myself to you, the Crown Prince, even if I am an investor with dozens of entrepreneurs?’

“No, I was only reading and answering letters at the mansion. More than that...”

She was worried about Asher, whether he had heard of Princess Isis, or if he had heard she was now marrying a king of another country and gathering the Aristocratic Party again.

“I was worried about you.”

So, she said with a heartfelt expression, and he had a kindness on his face, and he seemed glad that Aria had been worried about him.

“I feel like I’m going to have a hard time... as you’ve worried about me.”

“I’ll be worried about you, and you don’t have to think about it!”

Aria was a little angry at the answer, not knowing whether it was a joke or a serious answer, and Asher closed his eyes and laughed. It was the first time for him to smile so brightly that Aria stared at him for a long time, not knowing that her cheeks were blushing.

“I’m not as weak as you think I am.”

No, the Crown Prince she remembered was a weak man who had been swayed by the Aristocratic Party and could not even give his name. She didn't understand why he could now spread his wings like this.

As he read the anxiety and worries in Aria's eyes, he gave an explanation to gain her trust.

"Of course, there's nothing I can say about looking weak. In fact, I never thought I'd get the upper hand from the Aristocratic Party so soon. I thought it was a long-term game. If necessary... I was thinking of marrying the princess. I was desperate because I didn't see a single hole to get out."

As he brought up the story of his marriage to the princess, Aria's face darkened. As if to reassure her, Asher held the hand of Aria who held the mug tightly. When the warmth of Asher reached her hand, which had cooled down a little bit, she felt that her anxiety was gone.

"But perhaps since I met you."

He continued with a small smile as if he were recalling the day when he had first met Aria.

"The memory of being so embarrassed was few. Ever since I was a kid, I've always been obsessed with the idea of planning thoroughly and completely... but it all became useless when I met you."

"... You're talking about the casino case."

It was the connection that had begun with the word to sell the auction ticket to the owner of the general store; it was the connection that was possible because of knowing the future, which had never been possible in the past.

“Yes, I’ve been working on it for a long time, but it was going to be wrong. Since then, I’ve confirmed that the rumor has spread, as you said, and I found out that it wasn’t, so I’ve been looking into you.”

There had been a misunderstanding between her and Mielle, and Aria had also mistaken him for his identity.

“The more I knew you, the more mysterious you become. I had a chance that I didn’t expect from your wise advice.”

It had been part of Aria’s perception. But the work of the princess had been different. Although not officially confirmed, they had been talking about marriage for years. But she would suddenly marry the king of another country.

“But the princess...”

“I know what you’re worried about. But I want you to trust me a little more. I’m a person who never misses an opportunity if it comes to me.”

He did not bring up all his words, but the gentle look of Asher was certain that there was a solution.

“May I visit the mansion of the Count in the near future?”

‘Last time you came without permission.’ So, she thought he would like to move the space as he did last time, but at the words that followed, she immediately knew that it was not.

“I’d like to give them a formal greeting and ask them their permission”

“Formal greeting...? And permission for what...?”

“Will it be okay for me to like you in the future?”

“...!?”

Thud. Her heart began to pound as if something heavy had fallen over her chest. She had thought he might have feelings more than like, or like, for herself, but when she heard it through his mouth, she was almost breathless.

“I’ve done that many times before, but... I don’t know if I’ll meet you at the ceremony today, so all I can give is a tulip.”

As if it had already been set up, a beautiful bunch of tulips was in the hands of the butler, who had appeared, and Asher handed it and went down politely to one knee in front of Aria.

“Can I ask for a formal date?”

There was no worry or anxiousness in his eyes, which he asked with a bouquet of flowers. There was a conviction that Aria would receive his bouquet. He was really a man who didn’t miss a chance.

“Then I want to receive it in a place that is a little bit more brilliant and magnificent next time. There’s only once in a lifetime. ”

So, as expected, she received the bouquet of flowers and said while Asher smiled brightly with a big smile,

“I will do it for you even if I use all of the empire’s resources.”

* * *

The Countess, who returned first to the mansion of the Count, did not hear a detailed explanation, but she summed up the situation and the dialogue at that time to draw her own conclusion.

‘The Investor A who has been complimented so much in public was Aria, and she continued to meet the Crown Prince for a long time, and even the princess, who has become famous as the fiancée of the Crown Prince, would be married to the king of another country...’

Perhaps it was a very reasonable conclusion that the Crown Prince had kicked out the princess to make Aria his wife, who had an emerging power on her back. It was a very sound conclusion.

‘... Oh my god!’

After sorting out, a shrill scream on her chest was flowing out. Aria was so beautiful, and the Countess thought she could find a good mate, but she had never thought it would be a member of the imperial family.

She had only a small thought to benefit her daughter by sending her to a good marriage, but she felt highly flattered by the fact that it was the noblest royal family in the empire that was unparalleled to any family. Her astonishment continued even after the carriage arrived at the mansion.

“You’ve been to the completion ceremony quite quickly, which my father was very uncomfortable with.”

Mielle, who was about to go out or come down to the first floor, dressed nicely to greet the Countess. Her personality suddenly changed after Emma’s death, and she blamed the Countess’s behavior, showing signs of discomfort. She seemed to have found her true self,

abandoning all her hardworking acts of kindness.

It was true that she knew the Count would hate it, but she had forced herself to go out of the mansion, so she would have laughed if she had been normal, but not now. Mielle didn't even know what had been revealed at the ceremony.

The Countess replied with a pleasant smile. "Mielle, I wish you had been there with me. There's been a great thing."

Although she was very willing to scold her, the Countess, who had a friendly smile that was like a mother's, answered in a slightly excited voice. A good thing had happened, and there was no need to rush recklessly.

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Chapter 152. The Scandal Of The Century, Part II

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

“Really? That’s very interesting. I’m going out for business.”

Mielle took a breath and left the mansion, looking totally uninteresting. As soon as the detestable figure disappeared, Annie, who was following the Countess, gritted her teeth.

“Then she’ll find out later and drop a fork or a cup of tea!”

Because she had witnessed it several times while serving Aria, even the modest Jessie hurriedly covered her mouth and held back her laughter. The Countess, who grasped Annie’s character with her sharp eyes, patted her hair.

“I think it’s time to make use of your specialty.”

“... My specialty?”

“Yes, I’m sure they’re all curious about what happened today.”

“Ahah!

Only then did Annie’s eyes shined when she realized what the Countess meant. It was time to make the proud appearance of her master, who had been hidden.

Already, it would have been told through the mouths of thousands of people outside. So why not let the mansion know that? In order to give the right treatment to Aria who would return soon... The excited Annie hurried around the mansion.

“Everyone! Something great happened! Don’t regret it later, let’s get together quickly!”

‘What’s the big deal?’ She was always the one who had brought new and interesting news, so the servants and maids, who were working all over the mansion, held out their heads, asking, “What’s that?”

‘Where will the Count, Cain, and Mielle, who went out, hear the news for Aria?’

Wherever it was, it must be a very interesting and enjoyable reaction that she had never seen before. The Countess disappeared into her room, humming and thinking that she might be called the mother of the Crown Princess, who had risen from a prostitute to a Countess.

* * *

Mielle’s carriage, heading for the mansion of the Duke, stopped in front of a famous bakery. It was to find a cake that she had reserved in advance. In order to take a freshly baked cake, she had to make a reservation ahead of time. While her maid went looking for it, she removed the curtains covering the window and looked outside.

‘There’s a lot of people today.’

Nearby, the academy's completion ceremony had been held, and the ceremony seemed to have ended, and the attendees were out. This was the only way down because it was the Imperial Castle if they went up.

'So why did the Countess, who went out with Aria, come back alone?'

At that time, while she was questioning what was happening, they were surprised and stopped in front of the carriage of Mielle.

"...?"

Normally, if they found a noble's carriage, they should avoid it a little or bend their heads. Strangely enough, more and more people stared at the wagon or approached and snooped.

"What's going on?"

At Mielle's question, the knight, who had been waiting, went out of the carriage to check. When she glanced out of the window, Mielle opened her eyes wide to see people who had been rude and could not hide their happy faces, let alone avoid the appearance of the knight. People said something eagerly to the knight with their full excited faces, and the knight cocked his head and talked to them for a long time.

'What the hell is that?'

She was curious about the strange situation. It was a matter that would end when he gave attention and make them scatter, but why was he taking so long? The conversation, which continued until her maid with the cake appeared, ended when the joy gradually faded

from the faces of the common people who had gathered there, and only after they had dispersed. To the knight, who returned with a look of embarrassment, Mielle asked what the reason was.

“That’s...”

But the knight could not easily answer Mielle’s question. The maid, who noticed from his side, intercepted the answer. As the conversation between the knight and the common people did not end until the cake was brought out, she had grasped the content. Her face was lit up as if she had received a birthday present. She was in a state of great excitement.

“I’ll tell you. You know the famous investor in public, right? The investor has continued to invest in young and capable businessmen, regardless of their status!”

“... Investor A?”

“Yes, yes! Well, Investor A, showed up at the academy’s completion ceremony today!”

The hair of the maid, who nodded and answered brightly, sparkled the hairpin she had received from Aria.

“Oh, I’m sure they’re the ones who were there. So what does this have to do with it now?”

The important part was not told, so Mielle cocked her head and asked. The face of the knight darkened and the maid swallowed and raised her voice. “Surprisingly, I heard that Investor A was Miss Aria! That’s why people gathered around the wagon with the family seal on it! They wondered if Miss Aria was riding it!”

“... What?”

Mielle was as hard as stone when the maid answered with pride. Mielle stared at her maid without moving as if she had forgotten how to breathe. She looked as if she was saying such nonsense.

‘... Is the daughter of that vulgar prostitute the rumored Investor A? She is the one who the princess wanted to take on her side.’

‘Does this make sense? What the hell am I hearing?’ It was unbelievable, but it was a shock, so Mielle’s eyes opened a little bit wider, and she gave strength to her hands that were neatly placed on her legs.

She was a dumb woman with nothing but her face. But she was a great investor. She had not known who it was, but she mentioned that Investor A was a very discerning and intelligent person in front of the princess in the past, and she recalled it. Her inquiring voice trembled weakly.

“... Is that true? Is that really what they said? Didn’t they make a mistake?”

“That’s what they said. They mentioned Roscent Aria, who was rumored to be a wicked woman.”

“It’s true,” said the maid, but Mielle could not believe her maid’s repeated answer and stared at the knight and urged him to answer.

‘Please say no. I wish you would call it a foolish maid’s delusion.’ Contrary to Mielle’s expectations, however, the knight threw an answer to Mielle’s question by avoiding her gaze quietly.

How could that be so ridiculous...! The pale-faced Mielle was lost in her thoughts for a moment. She then ran out of the carriage. It was a rough move that no noblewoman could ever think of. The knight called her from behind and hurried after her.

In case someone, who had not yet left, ran around the carriage, mistaking her as Aria. There was an urgent document in his hand to show Aria.

"... Oh, I'm sorry!"

Soon, however, he realized that all but her hair and eyes were different and hurried to bow down to the noblewoman. Unlike Aria, who invested generously in the common people, ordinary aristocrats considered them insignificant.

"The investor... is a Roscent family? Is that why you're waiting?"

When the pale-faced Mielle asked like that, the man with his head down answered carefully,

"Yes? Oh, yes... she said her name was Roscent Aria."

"What was the color of her hair? What was the color of her eyes? How tall was she? How was her skin color? How was her tone? How old was she?"

The man, embarrassed for a moment by the incessant flood of questions, soon began to answer the questions one after the other; a brilliantly shiny blonde, beautiful appearance, and green eyes that seemed to contain jewels. They were all just like Aria's appearance, and when Mielle lost her balance, the knight hurriedly supported her.

"... Uh, let's go quickly to the mansion of the Duke!"

As the knight assisted her to stand up and helped her walk back to the carriage, the people gathered around her to check what was going on, but there was no sound in Mielle's ear, perhaps because of the shock.

'Does the princess know this? What if she knows? Isn't it going to spark me? ... don't tell me she's thinking of joining hands with the daughter of that vulgar prostitute...?'

Mielle, who grasped her heart in order to stop it from beating so fast, raised her voice by asking the driver to go to the mansion of the Duke as soon as possible, and the wagon that ran as fast as it could rattled and headed to its destination.

The princess, who was talking to a guest, greeted the visiting Mielle with pleasure as if she had not yet heard the public gossip.

"Oh my God, you don't look good, Lady Mielle. What's going on?"

"That's...!"

Mielle could not answer, looking at Vika, who was following after Isis out of the lounge. Vika, who knew he was a hindrance, said goodbye with an unexpected smile.

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Chapter 153. The Scandal Of The Century, Part III

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

“Miss Isis, my business here is done, so I’ll go now.”

“Thank you for your advice, Vika.”

Mielle, who was left with only the princess, shuddered as she could not bring up the story of Aria. It was even more difficult to talk about it as Oscar also came down after hearing her visit. But because she could not keep her mouth shut for long, Mielle soon closed her eyes and announced the sad news.

“... In today’s ceremony, Investor A showed up.”

“Oh my God, is that true? That’s an interesting story... Is the person behind Investor A really that unexpected? You are trembling so much.”

Isis squinted at the unusual response, and Oscar frowned. ‘Who in the world?’ Mielle, who took a sip of tea with her trembling hands, could not delay her news any longer and said in a very small voice,

“That’s... that’s the woman.”

The woman? The calling was replaced by Isis because she hadn’t even wanted to call Aria’s name.

“... Did you just say ‘the woman’? That’s a lot of mischiefs.”

When Isis asked again with a smile on her face, Mielle closed her eyes and replied yes.

“It’s true...”

As she did earlier, Isis was also hardwired. Isis, who had been so hardened for a long time due to a lot of nonsense, called in her own servant to find out the truth.

“... Make sure it’s real right now.”

Oscar, who couldn’t figure out alone who they were referring to, asked many times, but no one answered.

So there was still silence, and no conversation went on. The servant who had gone to look for information about Investor A, following Isis’s instructions, came back quickly.

“... Miss Isis. Investor A identified herself as Roscent Aria...”

Clink. Isis threw her own teacup before the servant’s report was over. Mielle was shocked and her body trembled, and when he noticed the identity of the woman, Oscar was shocked and covered his mouth with his palm.

“... Yeah, it was not unusual to talk back to me as I first met her. ”

When she said so, Isis laughed loudly as if it was ridiculous. She added that she now knew why Investor A had refused firmly when she sent letters and people to Investor A several times. If she had done so sincerely, anyone would have met her at least once. Then, beside her, the servant, who had not finished his report yet, bit his lips and was restless.

“I should have gotten rid of that wicked woman right away.”

She gritted her teeth, and her voice had a murderous spirit. If Aria was in front of her now, her murderous spirit would twist Aria’s slender neck right away. As she cursed for a long time, Isis shone as if a good idea came to mind.

“Anyway, it was the force I was trying to get rid of because I couldn’t pull it to my side, and even now...”

Everything would be done if she eliminated those who had received the investment, and she could not attract even Aria who was annoying. No matter how great she was, she was only the daughter of a prostitute. If she hired a killer, she could get rid of her without that much difficulty.

Isis, who wanted to be alone, ordered the servant to head out, and he shook his head and said something he could not finish,

“Well... Miss... I have one more thing to report.”

Isis sensed a tremendous fear from what the lingering servant was about to say. She was more scared now than when he reported that Aria was Investor A. ‘Is it something worse than what you said earlier?’

Insulted by the Crown Prince, she had to bow her head to those who had followed her. To make up for it, she even joined hands with the king of another country. It was a shame that she, who was a noble since birth and had royal blood, could not express her feelings with words.

So there was nothing more shocking than that. For some reason, her heart that was beating really fast seemed to want to get out of her mouth, but she pretended to be casual and urged him to report. Then the servant, who took his time for a while, closed his eyes and continued to speak slowly,

“After the ceremony... with the Crown Prince... she’s gone. She spoke as if she had been meeting him for a long time...”

“... What?”

“It is rumored that Lady Aria of the Roscent family... seems to have a close connection with the Crown Prince, His Highness...”

‘So all this insult and shame... happened because of that vulgar bitch...’

Flop.

“Dear Princess...! ”

“Sister!”

Even before the servant’s words ended, Isis, who was distracted by anger and shock, fell to the cold floor.

* * *

“Aria!”

After spending some time with Asher, walking in the woods, or visiting a villa, the Count, who was supposed to return late at night, welcomed Aria. His face, facial expressions, and eyes reminded her of why he had returned home quickly.

“You came back quickly.”

“I was back in a hurry after work.”

Friendlier than ever before, the Count smiled brightly and looked at her with affection and a loving face, and he asked Aria to have tea with him after a long time.

‘For a long time? Isn’t this the first time?’

He would like to ask all his questions here, but he seemed to be trying to act nobly while drinking tea.

Cain was behind the Count and had a broken face. He looked as if he had lost a country. ‘Why does he look like he lost something even though he had nothing to lose from the beginning?’

‘Do I need to curry favor with them and to be bothered at a time when I am supposed to be formally dating the Crown Prince?’ As the Count had decided to take the side of the princess, he was close to the enemy wearing the leather of a family. As Aria delayed the answer agonizing over how to make a profit, the Count prompted her to move on quickly.

“Honey, Aria must be tired. She’s been out since morning and now she just came back.

It was none other than the Countess who saved Aria from the Count. Unlike usual, she raised her beautiful face and rebuked the Count as she descended from the second floor.

“So shouldn’t you be considerate?”

She was utterly complaining whether she was going to shake off all the humiliation she had ever gone through. This time, the Count began to notice her complexion.

“... Hmm, I suppose so. I think you’d better rest, and let’s talk tomorrow morning instead.”

Aria, who smiled brightly at the Count who changed his words in an instant, was about to say that she would go up first, but Mielle, who had gone out to the mansion of the Duke, returned home with red, bloodshot eyes. Aria was convinced that it had something to do with her. Aria greeted and welcomed her.

“Welcome home, Mielle.”

“...!”

She stepped back in amazement since she didn’t think she would face Aria as soon as she returned to the mansion. Her eyes wandered around and shook.

‘Oh, my god, it’s so funny.’

It was very pleasant and fun, so she cleared her mind. She straightened her back and went straight back to her room.

“I should have reported it first. It’s too late. I’m sorry to hide it in the meantime.”

As soon as she said that, eyes gathered in a flash. It was the expectation, frustration, and anger of Aria to announce what everyone already knew. She was Investor A—a key figure in the empire's new power.

Aria, who looked at everyone, taking all their eyes on her whole body, as if enjoying it, opened her mouth laughing as if she was very happy.

"And the person who was dating me said he wanted to visit the mansion soon. He wanted to ask permission, but I don't know what kind of permission it is, and I would know it in detail until that day.

But Aria, who had thrown a bomb that was unexpected for everyone, climbed up the stairs and went back to her room, leaving them confused, shocked and embarrassed.

In the hall where she left, there was stillness and silence as if there were no people.

* * *

"Miss. You have to go down to the dining room."

The next day, Jessie spoke to Aria in a worried voice. Aria was writing a letter while drinking a simple tea without eating anything even though it was already time for breakfast.

"I'm a little tired today. I'm not feeling well, so I'll skip breakfast."

However, Aria smiled and shook her head, betraying the expectations of the people of the mansion of the Count who waited only for breakfast. In fact, she was actually feeling well. She was just saying that she was sick in order to worry them.

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Chapter 154. The Scandal Of The Century, Part IV

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

It wasn't because there was a plan. It was just fun. 'Why should I go ahead and give them pleasure?' That was not necessary.

"Jessie, deliver this letter to Sarah. And bring a snack to the room."

Aria wrote a letter describing her situation to Sarah. She sealed it finely and handed it to Jessie.

"You just said you weren't feeling well." Annie said that she would bring Aria's meal instead of the puzzled Jessie.

She spent a leisurely morning relaxing with light soups and drinks and organizing her plans for the future. Looking out, she saw some young men who seemed to be wrestling with guards in front of the mansion gate.

"... Lady Aria...! Just a moment...!"

Aria didn't hear what he was saying because he was too far, but she thought that it might have something to do with himself after the completion ceremony. So Aria sent Annie to find out about the disturbance, and it was as she had guessed.

"He's making a fuss about showing his business plan to you."

"Really?"

"They say he doesn't listen to them even if they ask him to go back. He wants to see you at least once. Even if I ask him to deliver the plan to Baron Burboom, he doesn't listen! How rude!"

That was understandable because it was rare to invest in a commoner with no foundation. In addition, there was a widespread rumor that Investor A's investment projects had all hit the jackpot. Moreover, she had invested in the academy like charity, and she had proudly declared that she would continue to invest, so anyone would want Aria to take a look at their business.

"Let him come in."

"... Miss?"

"It's my job to look at his business plan. I can't treat him badly since he had come this far."

She had managed to find a way to freshen up her image, so she couldn't throw away anything regardless of how small it was. Now was the time to embrace the poor and make the wicked woman into a saint.

"I'm sure he's been walking since early in the morning, so he'd better take a simple meal with me. Tell the servants and maids to decorate the garden for a meal, enough to serve a guest."

"But, but Miss...! You don't know what kind of trouble you can get into if you just let anyone come in!"

That was true, but she had the hourglass to prepare for such things. Aria smiled softly as she glanced at the hourglass she had placed at the cabinet.

"Annie, do you think I'm stupid?"

It was only then that Annie swallowed her saliva when she recalled that Aria had already gone through a lot of frightening things. Recently, Aria clearly showed a benevolent, soft-faced look and went around as if she were a saint, but Annie, who was nearby, could tell that the wicked woman sometimes lurked inside of her just as the rumors said.

"So make sure it's not too late to prepare it."

"... Yes, yes! Miss!"

With the help of Annie's quick actions, they quickly became ready to receive their guest in the garden. The Count, who had not been able to go out to hear the details from Aria, was puzzled and asked the servant why,

"I just heard... that Lady Aria told Annie to prepare..."

"Did Aria order it?"

The Count expressed his pride, misunderstanding that she had arranged the meeting place to explain the details to him. He didn't know that it was a big misunderstanding.

"My God, Lady Aria! Thank you very much! I would already be glad if you accept my business plan, but you also arranged a meal like this for me!"

"You've come to me like this, and I can't refuse your admittance. I'm sure you've had a hard time, and I hope you enjoy your meal slowly. While you're eating, I'll go through your business plan."

"Thank, thank you!"

In the soft and warm sunshine, nearly ten young men began to eat in a hurry. Then the Count, the Countess, and Cain, who had misunderstood, came and saw it with a stunned face. Mielle, with a tender heart, watched the scene from the window and soon closed the window with a distorted face. The Count approached Aria, who reviewed the documents with a serious face and asked quietly,

"... Aria, don't you think that it would be enough if you have just received the documents?"

"They've been waiting since morning, and I can't just send them back."

"I... "

'I've been waiting for you since last night.' The Count gave a bitter smile since he couldn't say what he really wanted to say. 'How did I end up in a position where I could not speak my mind to my stepdaughter?' Having the merchant's temperament to the bone, he closed his mouth and sat in the dining table when he realized that he was not supposed to do so.

“Didn’t you eat inside already?”

“I can’t miss this place with the young businessmen! I’m curious because they will become the pillar of the empire in the future.”

The Count, who never thought so, wrapped up in plausible words, and Cain and the Countess followed him. They seemed very uncomfortable, but no one took it out of their mouths.

“Do they have any good ideas?”

Aria made a meaningful smile at the Count’s question. What he wanted was to see them. But she could not. Unlike herself, who only cared about investing purely, the Count seemed to take the brilliant ideas of these young businessmen, so she replaced the answer with just a nod.

“Okay, you’ve all brought a good plan.”

The faces of the young people, who were eating, became bright. The fact that they were recognized by Aria meant that they were excellent in doing business.

“They are fresh and unique. They are valuable projects. However, I still see things that need to be revised.”

Of course, it was empty talk. In retrospect, none of the business plans would succeed in the future. Furthermore, judging from the knowledge that they put in their projects, they were just common people, who were not fit for doing business.

Even so, it was judged that if they had the ability to make such a neat analysis and organize a plan, they could help others. It was a great opportunity.

“So I want to give you a chance.”

Aria suggested that they should study at the academy. The young people became disappointed upon hearing what Aria said. They felt rejected because of what Aria said. She served them lunch, but she couldn't just finish the meeting just like that, so Aria told them the following,

“If you all didn't have any talent, I wouldn't recommend the academy to all of you and just sent you back... but you all are talented people, so I'll support you with your school expenses.”

She had been thinking that it would not be too bad to support a scholarship named after her anyway. It was also an offer from Asher, and it was so she could put on airs so she could look good. It was nothing more than a penny. The young people were thrilled to hear that she would even sponsor their tuition, along with praise for their talent although they kind of got rejected.

“Why don't you have a cup of tea and go back?”

“No, I got a great favor from you, and I can't stay still!”

Aria, watching the vigorous disappearance of the young men, slowly hardened her face and laid down her fork and knife. The meal was excellent, but she had a bad appetite. It was due to the table manners of the young people.

She felt like she knew how they had felt when they had been in the same situation as she had had no table manners in the past. Thinking that the hindrance had finally disappeared, the Count spoke to Aria without missing the chance,

“Aria, are the rumors true?”

He had a very urgent look on his face. He deserved it as he saw even the young people who came with business plans. They were not like... noblemen, but hungry beasts that were wandering the streets.

"... Rumors?" She couldn't see the Count's face that much, and she pretended not to know it.

He raised his voice as if he were frustrated and said, "The rumors that you're Investor A and are close to the Crown Prince!"

He already saw the young people come and then go, but he still wanted to confirm.

When she nodded and expressed a sign of affirmation, the Count smiled brightly and said, "That was cool." The Count did not confirm the rumors again because the Countess had already seen it in person, and he had already confirmed it through numerous mouths.

"As expected, I've always known that you have the talent since you were young!"

'Does he mean the fur business, which Lane misunderstood as Mielle's design?'

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Chapter 155. The Scandal Of The Century, Part V

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

However, the Count did not take any action to correct it otherwise. Even She had contributed much to the warehouse business, but the Count had not even mentioned what was going on with the business, let alone recognize herself.

“I see. I thought you forgot because you didn’t mention anything. That’s why I moved independently.”

Aria replied with a smile mixed with laughter. She didn’t have to be wary anymore, so she blamed him for his faults. So the Count felt a prick of conscience and cleared his throat, and turned the sensitive topic as if he had done nothing wrong in the past.

“Yes, yes. Now I know it. From now on, I think you should go outside with Cain. I’ve got a lot of work to do!”

He proudly demanded that she should help his business in the future. It was a natural tone for Aria to help him. No, it was a tone that he would make that way.

“No, you know, I’m busy. There are young people who would come here like this, so I should welcome them. I can’t leave my place because letters are coming from other countries.”

However, the Count’s mouth closed as if it had been stitched up by her firm refusal. Certainly, it was because she seemed to look busy for anyone. Perhaps he realized that he had already missed the opportunity, and the Count’s eyes wandered through the air.

“... You’ve known the Crown Prince before, haven’t you?”

Cain, who managed to find a gap, asked. His expression was quite serious. The Countess also waited with her eyes glistening for an answer, for she seemed curious.

“It’s been two years since I was fourteen.”

It was a remarkable period even when she said so. It had been two years since that bad relationship. The Crown Prince, who was a boy, would become an adult at the age of twenty, starting with this year’s birthday. Starting with the coming-of-age ceremony, he would have an official appearance, and unlike in the past, he would exalt himself in the world.

‘Can I be myself that would sit next to him?’ She smiled with an uncanny smile of anticipation and anxiety, but Cain accepted it strange and furrowed his forehead to the fullest extent. The Countess made a fuss, saying, “Why did you hide it all this time?”

“I met him without knowing who he was. I only recently knew that he was the Crown Prince.”

“Oh, my god...! It’s like a story in a novel! You’ve fallen in love without knowing each other! How could it be romantic?”

She was like a girl in admiration. She seemed happy since her daughter had achieved a dream she had never dreamed of.

“Don’t tell me, is that the man you met before in court, the Crown Prince... not Mr. Pinonua?”

“Oh, come to think of it, you’ve met him. That’s right. Pinonua is... he said it’s a name he borrowed for a while.”

“Oh, did he come to court as he was worried about you, even if he was busy?”

“He said yes. Is this the end of the question? I think it’s better to hear more about it when Mr. Asher comes. If I tell you all, the conversation between us will disappear.”

Aria said that and returned to her room. In the warm sunlit garden, only three people left with different thoughts and hearts.

* * *

It took less than two days that the rumors that she had served meals to the young men who had visited her covered the capital.

The wicked woman of the rumor, no, Aria, now a beautiful investor of the rumors who had tried to raise her social status and understand the common people, smiled as she watched the young people gathered at the gate of the mansion today.

“Miss! I told them to come on a set date and time every week as you ordered!” Jessie said with a bright face.

‘I am an investor who talks to young entrepreneurs every week. What a beautiful thing it is!’

“Good job.”

“And I brought a newspaper, a little early. Hans brought it to the mansion himself.”

“Really?”

Jessie’s expression of taking out the newspaper was very bright. Aria sensed that her story was in the newspaper.

‘What kind of praise are they giving me?’ She opened the newspaper with anticipation, and Jessie added,

“It looks like Hans has entered the academy you invested in! I heard that he got a scholarship! So I thought he was running out of time, so I said he’d bring newspapers to the mansion as he had a free time.”

“... Really?”

She felt strange when she heard a story she had never thought of because in the past he had faced a terrible end, but he found his own happiness now. And she expected that she would be able to face such a future like that, by getting rid of the real wicked woman.

[The wicked woman of the rumors was a saint!]

The article seemed to represent her heart, and Aria’s mouth went up high in the sky. Jessie had a bright face as if she read it before handing it out.

After it had turned out that she was the Investor A of rumors, she had not won popularity. It was thanks to the two years of changing the very little things step by step. A group of young people who she had met at a meeting with Sarah, and the servants and maids of the mansion, or a group of people with her support for business were the examples.

It was also thanks to the fact that she had sometimes attended the official meeting and revealed that she had a brilliant and beautiful appearance and elegant demeanor that was completely different from what was rumored. And playing the victim extensively in Emma's case had also played a part. All those little efforts that she'd made so far shone through this opportunity.

'I never thought I'd be so successful in business at first.'

The reason she had talked about business for the first time was to somehow win the Count's heart in revenge against Mielle. But then she had realized it was wrong and jumped on her own business to create her own power to survive Mielle and the princess; however, she had not even expected to be so successful like this.

She hadn't even imagined it would make her happy to have such a relationship with someone. Compared to then and now, she felt as if she were someone else.

"It's finally going to turn out that the rumors about you have been malicious!"

Jessie didn't even remember what she had when Aria had first come into the mansion, but Jessie erased a hint of anxiety about her master and revealed her pure trust.

'If I could go back, I would like to go back to the time when I just came into the mansion.'

Then, she wouldn't have needed these annoying series of actions. She wouldn't have been mean to Jessie either. However, she had returned to the vague time when she had done something bad to Jessie, and she had repaid it back. Aria soon shook her head and took her regrets out of her mind, because she didn't even have enough time to maintain what she got.

Aria turned to the newspaper again. No matter how cheap the newspaper the common people read was, the story would be delivered to the Count, Cain, and Mielle.

Whether it was the case or not, the Count and Cain had silently committed to their work for some time, and they had returned home late and it was hard to see their faces. Still, Aria asked Jessie, suspecting that there must be another because he was a merchant who didn't miss what was in his interest.

"What about Mielle?"

"Ah... she went out early."

And for some purpose, Mielle had been busy going out lately, too. So, Aria narrowed her eyes.

'I wouldn't be able to carry my face if it were me. She is a brazen-faced girl.'

Although her reputation had been declining day by day, Mielle got up again and forced her to go out. The destination was... probably the mansion of the Duke, to meet the princess who had connected her with Oscar.

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Chapter 156. The Scandal Of The Century, Part VI

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

According to reports by the maids of the mansion, if there had been a big incident, Mielle had received a letter from the princess. And they also said that even before the incident, letters had often arrived. So she must have gone for advice again this time.

‘And how angry and upset the princess would be because she would think I intercepted the Crown Prince.’

Before the Crown Prince, Aria had also had a scandal with Isis’s lovely brother. Aria hadn’t met her a few times, but she was sure Isis wanted to rip her to death because she had been involved in bad things.

‘Now that Mielle is dependent on her, is the real enemy the princess?’

If she were to continue her meeting with the Crown Prince anyway, the princess would naturally be an enemy, but apart from that, she was bound by her personal grudge. Aria could not forget the hostile look at Mielle’s birthday party.

So she spent the day thinking about how to stop Isis from seeking new power by marrying the king of another country, and how to check it, but a guest visited her late in the evening. He was an unexpected guest, with a bunch of tulip flowers that didn't wither easily, and a gift box in his hand.

"... Mr. Lane?"

"I'm sorry if I'm late at night. I've been on a business trip to a faraway place, and I didn't have a free time to visit."

His visit meant that she could hear the news of Asher. She was in a hurry to prepare tea, but unfortunately, the Count and Cain came home at that moment.

The Count had to inform Cain of his work and deal with the accumulated work, so he looked very tired. It was also because of the rumors circulating between her two daughters. He had not cared about his stepdaughter when she had been a wicked woman, but how painful it must be for his own daughter to become a wicked woman. However, the rumors were all grounded and he did not take action otherwise. If there were no grounds for the rumors, he would have been around, saying, "This was all Aria's work."

That was why the Count did not like Lane, who had come to visit after a long time. It was also because there was nothing more to take from him.

"What brings you here so late? I remember you said that you wouldn't come anymore. Don't tell me, you came here because you were interested in Aria?"

The Count, who had tried to pass Aria on to Rain in the past, was now wondering if Lane would be interested in Aria. He didn't even know Aria's snorting at his two-faced figure. Cain also glared at Lane with a face similar to his father's.

They did not welcome him enough to make him uncomfortable, but Lane answered with a careless face, “Haha. I wanted to, but I was wondering if the Count is doing well. My master asked me to say hello and he is very interested in the Count’s business.”

“Really? Well... then.”

When Lane even mentioned his master, who had helped the Count, he suggested that Rain eat with him, with his exhausted body, since he could no longer be uncomfortable. He seemed, of course, to think that Lane had come to see him. Lane looked a little uncomfortable, but soon nodded and headed to the dining room. The bouquets and gifts he had prepared were given to Aria at the instruction of Asher so that all his business was done.

‘Why didn’t Mr. Asher come by himself?’

He used to come to her room. As she was curious, she hurried up to her room and opened the letter. The present was a backseat.

[I’m sending you a letter through Lane because I’m in a difficult place to visit you.]

Through the first sentence, Aria realized it was not that he had not come but that he could not. ‘Where in the world did he go so that he could not come?’ She read the letter in haste again, fearing that he might be wandering around strange places by hostile forces as before.

[It’s not something you should worry about. The reason why I am sending this letter is because I couldn’t contact you because I told you at the last meeting I’d visit you soon. I was thinking about when it would be good, and I thought it would be better to coordinate the timing with you.]

In the following letter was written as if he had spoken to her before her eyes as if he had read and thought of her mind. Since then, it was written about the time that Asher wished to visit, and it was quite late at night. It also said that just in case she should vacate the room that day, so she put it in her head so that she wouldn't forget it.

'... What is this?'

When she finished reading the letter, she looked at it for a while and opened the present she had left on the table, and there was a bracelet she had never seen. It was made up of a string of thin threads tied together. It was the first time she saw it.

'Is he out of the country?'

That was why she felt like he had sent her this amazing ornament. Wherever he was, she hoped he would come back in good health, and she re-opened what she had to do.

* * *

"Look at this cookie. It's fresh in shape."

"Yes. It's cute."

Young ladies, seated at a luxurious table in a colorful garden, each expressed exaggerated admiration. At the center of them was Mielle.

"It's a special one from the princess."

"It's as expected."

"She has a different eye."

They tried to pretend to be calm, ignoring the bombs that fell in their territory. They were gathered to do so. As they were anxious and worried by themselves alone, they brainwashed each other as if the situation would be okay.

“Then, the wicked woman of rumors... You know, she’s been running around like that, and she’s... Well, she made the worst choice.”

“She has the dirty blood and so she’s been doing like that. She is a creature that must be parasitic, just like her mother.”

“I’m worried about the future of the empire.”

And they gathered to attack the public enemy.

“I’m sure the princess is struggling to stop it.”

“That’s right. She’d rather join hands with another country than have dirty blood as the descendant of the empire.”

Finally, it was to praise the existence that they believed in and should follow. It was Mielle’s job to unite the hearts of aristocratic ladies in this situation, where rumors about herself and their faith in the Aristocratic Party had become blurred.

Unlike Aria, who had built her own power, what all other aristocratic ladies could do in the present situation was to gather and enjoy refreshments and gossip.

“I’ll pass on your opinion to Isis. I’m sure she’ll be happy.”

In fact, it was only their names she would actually tell, but Mielle, who spoke empty words as a representative, spent time with the young ladies in moderation before heading to the princess.

It was Isis, who had become nervous after knowing that the Crown Prince was meeting with Aria. It was because of the shock that the daughter of a prostitute, who was no one else, would take her place. Even if she had been elevated to her status who would give a new power to him.

‘If I haven’t been compared.’ Mielle was also shocked, but not as much as Isis. The princess had been compared to the dirty blood she had hated so much. There was even an opinion that, unlike when Mielle and Aria were compared, Aria of shallow birth was better than Isis, who succeeded the blood of the Imperial family.

It was those who were possessed by her frivolous appearance, and those who were possessed by her false character. Mielle reported what had happened in the meanwhile, as she tried not to offend the princess as much as she could.

“You don’t have to worry about the young ladies. They are so loyal to you. If they had a betrayer, they’d throw themselves to stop her.”

Although it was not an important report that Isis wished for, she treated that it was a matter of great importance. That was why Isis answered with a cold face and asked something else,

“... I see. Did His Highness ever visit the mansion?”

“Yes? Oh, no. Not yet...”

Isis was obsessed with it to the point that she regretted if she made a report. Even after quite some time, the shadow of the Crown Prince was not visible.

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Chapter 157. The Scandal Of The Century, Part VII

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

Mielle opened her mouth to try to change the mood. “Wouldn’t the woman be lying? It may be a bluff. His Highness hasn’t said anything yet. Maybe she’s running around alone.”

But the more Mielle spoke, the worse Isis felt. It was because she knew it wasn’t. There was a past in which she could guess. It was the engagement ceremony of the Marquis of Vincent.

For Isis, who had secretly captured the situation in the garden, this situation did not appear to be false or pretentious. ‘Didn’t he even say he had no intention of marrying herself on the spot?’ As she could not show any more ugly looks, Isis hid her trembling hands under the table and said with a deep sigh, “... We have to do whatever we can to separate them, for the honor of the nobility.”

“... Yes, you’re right.”

“I’ll figure out how to do it by myself, so please persuade the Count as much as you can.”

Now there was no Emma to help her, Mielle nodded and expressed her sympathy, because what Isis said was quite natural. But she had already failed a few times, so what could she do now? Sensing the anxiety reflected on Mielle's face, Isis uttered a spell to cheer her up,

"You're not old enough yet, but... there's always been an exception, so you'd better hurry up your engagement to Oscar, for the unity of the Aristocratic Party."

"... Yes?"

"His Highness is trying to take an unprecedented, humble woman to the Imperial Castle, and there's nothing you can't do about it. Since Oscar thinks so, you need to help."

"... Is it real?"

Mielle's eyes were motivated by Isis's sly reply. If it were true, she'd be delighted, but even if it wasn't true, she knew Isis would make it that way.

"Don't worry, Lady Isis. I'll do whatever it takes to help Isis this time."

At the unexpected reward, Mielle had a strong response.

* * *

Aria's rumors spread smoothly. An inspiring story made as an important story again, and they praised her among themselves. Even it was a very easy thing to pick one or two young people to invest in a dinner at the mansion, and send them to the academy with scholarships.

"I heard Hans is that smart. It's gossipy, but he's been borrowing newspapers since he was very young, and he's known to be knowledgeable."

And Jessie sometimes brought up Hans's story. It was also because they had met regularly for several years. In addition, their friendship seemed to have grown rapidly in recent years, with the media called Aria.

"Really? How old is Hans?"

"He said he's going to be twenty this year"

"Jessie, he's the same age as you."

"Yes. That's why we talk the same language."

Jessie's shy smile made Aria feel the true joy she'd never seen before. Aria, who had squinted her eyes and watched it, nodded with a face that she would know.

'I was going to give her a more capable person.'

She had thought someone much better than Annie's. Aria thought she deserved it. Hans, who had a large family, was likely to give Jessie a hard time. So she was drinking tea to relieve her disappointment, and suddenly she had a good idea.

'I can raise Hans, right?'

Hans had received a scholarship and even entered the academy in recognition of his ability even though she had not helped him at all. Though left alone, he had been victorious, so if she could support him, he must be successful.

“Yes... good. Tell Hans that I have a great expectation.”

“Yes? Yes, Miss.”

Nor was she praised herself, but Aria’s expression was profound and mysterious as she stared at Jessie with a broad smile. She wouldn’t have known it in the past, but somehow she understood Jessie’s mood.

“Well, I’ll leave now. Don’t overwork.”

Jessie, who had brought the new tea out, left Aria’s room. After Jessie went out, it was time to lie down in bed if it were normal, but not today. Far from falling asleep, she had her eyes wide open. Because...

“Lady Aria.”

“... Mr. Asher.”

Because it was the day that Asher visited. He seemed to have come as soon as the work was done. He appeared with his very tired face. Somehow, she felt a hot wind on his collar. Aria, who had been waiting for him, had a cup of tea and read a book, but welcomed him with astonishment.

“My God. I think you have a little tan.”

“... I think it’s because I’ve been to a hot place.”

Asher’s eyes touched Aria’s slender wrists. He caught sight of the bracelet he had given her last time. It was a seemingly normal-looking bracelet, but the meaning inside was unusual. There was a sense of satisfaction in his gentle smiling eyes.

Aria had not noticed this and said that she would have liked to have drinks prepared, not tea.

As soon as he saw that Aria had a bad look, he asked, squinting his eyes, "Do you feel bad because I'm here?"

"No...! No way."

She had been looking forward to this day. She had been so busy every day but she had felt that time seemed to run slowly. When she tried to pour hot tea, he shook his head and poured the tea into the teacup himself.

"I can't have you do that who is busy struggling."

He also filled Aria's cup with tea. The Crown Prince who would never have done anything like this did that!

Feeling burdened by the words "Come on, sit down," she looked down at his hand, which seemed a little rougher, and she noticed him wearing the same ring as herself, though of different colors. When she had first seen it, she had thought it was a bit simple for a noblewoman to wear, but it seemed that he had intentionally chosen a simple design to wear it. That was why the discomfort of her heart melted away and the warm spring sun covered her heart.

"The ring... the color is different, but it's the same as the ring that Mr. Asher gave me."

"Oh, it's the same ring. The color has changed for a while now. After a while, the color will come back."

‘Will the color change?’ For such a thing, it was very mysterious to have a subtle blue glow. When she looked at it wonderfully, he took the ring out of his finger and put it on the table.

“... Oh my gosh.”

Then, the color changed in a flash as if the ring had a blue color.

“It’s a ring that comes down to the imperial family. It changes color when I use it. The ring which I gave you is the same.”

Aria, surprised by this, opened her eyes and asked, “... Then, is it like an imperial family heirloom?”

“I can say it’s similar. I inherited it from my father and mother.”

It was a ring with such a great meaning. She hadn’t thought it meant much because it wasn’t particularly colorful. Aria was very embarrassed. They look down at the ring in her hand which was shaking.

“I don’t know if I can take it...”

Asher, who stared at Aria, slowly reached out and took her hand with the ring.

“The ring’s owner is only you.”

Then he smiled softly, with his serious eyes, and replied with a very natural smile. ‘The owner of the ring? Although I have a date with him... it’s a little shy of...’

Her cheeks under her eyes glowed for nothing. So far, she had heard that she was beautiful or they liked her, but no one had ever talked about the future with her seriously. Moreover, for her living in the past and the present, Asher had always given her the first experience. If she would consider her real age including past life, he was so young, but he thrilled her so much.

After confessing the meaning of the ring, he swallowed and was apparently anxious because he had no answer from Aria. He looked nervous but quite different from his bold words.

He seemed worried, "What if Aria gives back the ring?" It was difficult to gauge each other's minds as they were still in the beginning stage. Aria, who had been looking for an answer for a while, soon held the hand of Asher, who covered her hand.

"I wonder if I deserve it, but... thank you."

He was a little surprised and ashamed, but there was no refusal anyway. Now he couldn't imagine anyone standing next to him. When Aria answered so, Asher, whose ears were blushed, folded his eyes finely and added strength to his hands.

"I'm just grateful."

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Chapter 158. The Scandal Of The Century, Part VIII

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

When she held his hands still, exchanging such ticklish words, she was overcome with a sense of satisfaction, even though she didn't exchange special actions or words. That was why people wanted to meet someone and date. Aria learned about it well over twenty years later.

And the new feeling changed Aria's future. It was changed from the shady future that was dotted with only darkness to the one in which light existed and was rather challenging. Aria, who had been so happy for a while, checked the time that had already passed and hurriedly said something she had prepared,

"Do you remember Lady Sarah, a daughter of the family of Viscount Lauren, who will be a wife of the Marquis?"

"Oh, of course, I remember."

"I don't know if she'll have time... I would like to ask Lady Sarah to teach students at the academy. What do you think? I thought it would be better to learn manners since everyone is a commoner."

Aria added that Sarah used to be her tutor and that she felt rewarding in teaching children and wanted to become a teacher later on.

Realizing that she didn't just say that Sarah's dream was to be a teacher, Asher erased his tender smile and took out the Crown Prince's face.

"If that happens, the people in the middle will be quite agitated."

"I'm sure so. Because there were a series of incidents lately..."

Aria, who had said that far, was wary of Asher. She thought he would already know about the princess, but just in case. Then he answered, 'I know what happened recently,' and continued with confidence,

"I'm sure there will be some nobles who will change their stance to support me because Marquis Vincent and Lady Sarah declared their support for me."

Aria also came back to the face of the investor and explained what he could get. It was possible because the two were helping each other to change their future, not just a relationship that led to a love affair between a man and a woman.

After talking for so long, Asher suddenly asked a question as he was preparing to go back late at night.

"Oh, by the way, did you have any private talk with the judge in court?"

Then Aria shook her head and said, "The judge? No...? I don't even remember her name."

"I see."

"What happened?"

"No, she was curious about you. She even asked me to set up a table to meet you, if it's okay."

"... Me?"

'Even her face was vague, but why? Doesn't she like me who meets Asher? Come to think of it, it occurred to her that the judge had checked her face in court and hesitated.' So when she furrowed her forehead because she could only think of negative thoughts, Asher tried to reassure and kissed Aria on the back of her hand.

"But..."

"She's already deployed far away from power. She's also a woman who's not married. She can't get involved with me. She's probably curious because the rumors are great."

"I'm glad to hear that."

Nevertheless, there were fears that she might not know. Once again, Asher set Aria at ease, and said that he would make a formal visit next week."

"I'll send a letter to the mansion."

Then Aria smiled as she tried to touch the back of her hand for a while when he had disappeared like a ghost. Then, a few days later, the mansion was disturbed by a letter stamped with the imperial seal. Of all occasions, it arrived early in the morning, and the Count delayed even going out, and the Countess blushed like a girl.

“Oh, my god, His Highness will visit this mansion...!” The Countess, who raised her voice, said, “I have to hurry up and decorate the mansion,” and she pushed the servants and maids. “Wipe clean without dust! I’m going to have to replace all the curtains and the carpet! The most luxurious one! I have to do the gardening, and...!”

The Countess’s orders fell incessantly. She acted as if she were building a new mansion. The servants and maids could be annoying, but it was for Aria and they were all eager to do their best. This was also because it had been accomplished by her step by step.

When she tried to dissuade the Countess, who said, “I have to prepare the new dress,” Mielle called Aria, with a cold look.

“Why did you call me?”

Aria guessed why she called her, but asked, pretending not to know it. And Mielle’s eyes sank coldly. Her spitting words had piercing thorns. They were sharp thorns only directed at Aria.

“Do you really think you’re going to be the wife of the Crown Prince?” Her face had an expression, “How dare you?”

Aria gave her a relaxed look and said, “Well, maybe I’ll suit better than the princess who holds hands with a foreign country and sells her country.”

At the level, Aria dealt with her, and Mielle shuddered and said, "How can you say such vulgar things?"

"It's true, isn't it? She's rallying all the nobles and acting like she's going to commit treason. Don't tell me, she's doing such a thing since she lost a man. Even the common people don't do that."

"... Don't insult the princess!"

Suddenly, Mielle shouted for a moment, and all eyes were directed to her.

Aria couldn't believe Mielle got angry after she provoked a quarrel first. Unlike Aria, who managed her facial expression flexibly, Mielle's expression was appalling.

'It's ugly.'

It was unimaginable. In the past, it had been all the opposite. Aria, feeling better, dropped her eyebrows as if she was surprised, and with a sad look, whispered to Mielle in silence,

"What if it's true? And you'd better also know that nothing changes when you're so angry. Now you don't have anyone to sacrifice like Emma, do you?"

'Don't tell me you're going to grab my hair. I hope you do it.' Expecting it, Aria smiled with a victorious smile, and Mielle, who was shaking her whole body, clenched her teeth. It was truly admirable self-control.

"... As expected, you're also the daughter of a foolish prostitute. Things don't work that easily, but you can't even figure out who you are. The blood of vulgarity deserves to remain shallow forever."

Then Mielle turned and disappeared upstairs.

Aria, embarrassed by the fact that she didn't know Mielle would make such a shocking remark, stopped for a moment with a dazed face, then let out a feigned smile. It was a vulgar expression that suited her very well.

* * *

The imperial carriage carrying the Crown Prince headed for the mansion of the Count Roscent. Wagons that were decorated with brilliant gold were not one, but two. One was carrying Asher, and the other was carrying gold and silver coins prepared as gifts.

"Oh, my God, what's that?!"

The carriages passed through the busy streets, so many people witnessed the scene. Most of the royal family's actions were secret unless it was an official event, so those who witnessed the unexpected outing opened their eyes and created speculation and rumors.

'Don't tell me, His Highness the Crown Prince is going to meet Roscent Aria...!?'

Fact-based rumors quickly engulfed the capital as the carriages headed toward the mansion of Count Roscent. The scandal of the century drew everyone's attention.

At that, a smile lifted the corner of the mouth of Asher, who examined the documents in the carriage. He looked very happy, unlike his usual, expressionless face, because he was on his way to see Aria. Of course, he could have visited as many times as he could without showing up like this, but he deliberately chose a fancy wagon with the imperial seal on it. The reason was simple. It was to spread more and more between himself and Aria. The reason why he had to make such a choice was because he wanted to show off. The great woman who was dealing with the empire was her lover.

"I'm pleased to see Your Highness the Crown Prince." The carriages arrived at the mansion of Count Roscent across the capital, with all eyes on them. As soon as the carriages stopped, the Count and Countess said, giving a full courtesy. As of yet, Asher didn't even get off the wagon, but they looked very nervous.

The servants and maids, who were waiting around the Countess, also bowed their heads. Mielle and Cain also took a polite attitude. Among them, Aria greeted him with her own back upright. It was her own privilege.

"Lady Aria."

Asher, who got out of the carriage late, was wearing a fancy dress she had never seen before. The white suit had the number of gold on it and was dazzling, and his fine-tuned hair and graceful appearance were admired. Unlike his previous black suits, which had erased his presence, his appearance was clearly the Crown Prince.

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Chapter 159. The Scandal Of The Century, Part IX

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

‘If you had just dressed up like this, I would have recognized that you are the Crown Prince.’

Aria greeted him with a flush of redness as he was more attentive than the academy’s completion ceremony.

“Mr. Asher, you’ve had a hard time after coming a long way.”

“I was just happy on my way to see you.”

Asher said in a friendly manner. They could only hear his voice, but they could feel how much he was for Aria.

“And the hardships must have been with the people in the mansion.”

‘What a benevolent person you are.’ The Crown Prince might be a little arrogant, but Asher said something he didn’t want to say to the people around him.

"Many people have suffered as you said, so please look around the mansion decorated with all their heart."

"I'll do that. I'm looking forward to it. Will you guide me?"

"Sure. Who else would do except me?"

In response, even Aria performed a pretentious performance, giving great emotion and joy to those who could only hear their voices.

"... Mr. Asterope."

As the two continued their futile talk in front of those who had bowed their heads, one of the closest aides of Asher finally winked at him by calling his name. This was because the conversation continued until all the presents on the wagon were dropped.

The one who spoke was well acquainted with Aria. It was Sorke, the knight whom she had met in the general store. Sorke, whose eyes met Aria, paid a brief silent tribute to her.

"Oh, I'm sorry. You can all stand up."

Only then did the people of the mansion, who raised their heads, identified the face of Asher. Unlike the secret rumors that he had shown only the weak aspects pushed by the Aristocratic Party, he was so bright and handsome, and they tried to swallow their reactions that were about to erupt.

'What on earth is that gold and silver coin?' An unheard-of gift of a wagonload of great gifts stole their attention. It was like a great gift in a fairy tale.

"This is my father and my mother."

The Count and Countess, who were briefly fascinated by Aria's introduction, bowed down again.

"I heard you're good people. Especially, the Count was very good at business. Lady Aria may have inherited that brilliance. And the Countess... you're such a beauty. I thought the most beautiful woman in the empire was Aria, but there are actually two. Thank you for allowing me to visit this way."

The tension disappeared a little from the Count and Countess's face as he complimented them by flattery as if he had oiled his mouth. They had been very worried because he was the Crown Prince, but he was so different. The Countess gazed ecstatically at him with a flushed face.

"And here... my brother Cain and sister Mielle."

Cain and Mielle took their courtesy at the introduction of Aria, which followed. It wasn't a bright look, but it wasn't even a face to be pointed out. They looked nervous, but the Crown Prince could overlook it. As expected, they were nobles, who knew how to hide their true self.

"I see."

Nevertheless, the response from Asher was cool. It was because he recognized Cain's face. He couldn't think of him as a good man who had shown his possessiveness to Aria in court. It was the dirty desire to possess her under the mask for her younger sister.

Besides, next to him was Mielle of the rumor. The sister who had used dirty tricks to bring Aria to death, and she was also the frontman of the ugly princess Isis.

They should be affectionate, but they had a brusque face. Asher gave strength to his fists for a while, and unlike the friendliness, he showed to the Count couple, he finished his greetings to Cain and Mielle with a quick glance.

"I am hungry. Maybe it's because I've been in a hurry since morning to meet you."

'How can you show them this satisfactory response?' Aria smiled brightly at the words of Asher, and the Count and Countess's face was again in contemplation. They then made a fuss, saying, "We should have moved to the dining area where we arranged in the garden before he mentioned it!"

Cain and Mielle, who couldn't complete the introduction properly and couldn't move due to stiffness, were laid aside. In the first place, he was in a position that was not strange enough to ignore them, and now the most important thing here was the hunger of Asher, so no one cared about it.

"I'm glad the weather is good. We've arranged a luncheon in the garden."

As she took his hand and moved to the luncheon venue, she glanced behind and saw her sister and brother, who tried to hide their angry expressions.

'The Crown Prince has visited, and you won't be able to leave first.'

'How uncomfortable is this seat?' They, who despised Aria for her humble origin, were now swallowing their anger, unable to resist a higher status than they were.

'You reap what you sow.'

Aria, feeling better thanks to Asher, smiled brightly and gracefully. It was a more beautiful smile than a garden full of lilies. Then, Asher also smiled facing Aria, as if he felt better. The two looked like they had already fallen in love with each other even though they just started dating. The Countess, who was impressed by this, glared her eyes and looked at it.

As soon as everyone sat down at the table, the meal began right away without delay. Whether they practiced all day and night, the movements of the attendants were so neat that they made no mistake.

“You must have cared about it.”

As he said, the elaborate dishes filled the tables one by one. They were course dishes that used the highest quality materials. It would be fine if it was dinner, but it was a little bit too much just for lunch.

Since he had left all the work for the meal to the Countess, the Count noticed the fact now, and he had a sinking heart. He seemed to think it was irony. At the inappropriate response, the Count swallowed and was worried that the Crown Prince would not be angry.

“I am deeply flattered by your treatment as it is too much.”

But unlike the Count’s worries, Asher was grateful for the meal rather than complaining about it, and he enjoyed it. The Count soon looked puzzled, and the Countess, who could not grasp the atmosphere, asked, blushing with delight, thinking that she had been praised for her work.

“I don’t know if it will fit your taste.”

“What are you talking about? It’s delicious.”

Although it was not necessary to gain their favor, Asher expressed his feelings to the Count and Countess throughout the meal. He behaved as if he had the lowest position there.

However, no matter how hostile he was as an opponent, as the Crown Prince, who would be the next emperor, he lowered himself and talked intimately. The Count became more excited like a disciple who wanted to be praised by his teacher.

"I heard that you've had a hard time with the fur business."

"Yes. Taxes on luxury goods are too much!"

"Oh, my... I could have helped you if I had known beforehand. I'm sorry about that."

"Thank you, those kind words are enough. I've been struggling with taxes for a while, but fortunately, Aria proposed a warehouse business, and I've been able to cut the taxes significantly. It was a bit of heavenly luck."

'You don't even know what you're talking about. Who helped you? Aria? In the first place, you made me suffer because of the tax matter.'

As if to prove that he was not the biological father of Aria, he showed his foolish side. Asher answered with his eyes squinted because of laughter,

"Oh, you did. Lady Aria is very intelligent indeed. I guess that's why I'm after her restlessly."

"... Oh my gosh."

The Countess had already uttered a lot of exclamations that she couldn't even count how many it was, and the conversation ended with Aria being praised. It was a matter of course. Today's main characters were Aria and Asher, and Aria had some commendable achievements, deserving the praise. It was quite natural to take such steps.

Mielle's face was pale, unable to put anything in her mouth the whole time because the table was uncomfortable. Sometimes she stared at her father, who complimented Aria.

Cain, on the other hand, gritted his teeth because of the friendly conversation that were happening, and he didn't touch the food in front of him as well. Nevertheless, he was afraid of his future and could not show it.

Aria, who glanced sideways at the two, smiled and opened her mouth. "Father and Mr. Asher, don't say that. I still can't catch up to Mielle. She's the best aristocratic spirit I have to emulate."

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Chapter 160. The Scandal Of The Century, Part X

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

Who would think so? When Aria deliberately pretended to be modest enough to know that no one thought so, it suddenly turned into an atmosphere of pouring cold water.

None of them were positive, but this was enough to shame Mielle. For someone who didn't know, she would look like a saint to cover up her sister who had damaged her, but Asher, who knew Aria's true self, broke his silence and opened his mouth because he realized what she was trying to do.

"... Did you? I didn't know that at all. I wonder what kind of person she is going to be because Lady Aria's praise is so great. The Count must be secure since you have two wise daughters."

"... Thank you."

It was as if he had never heard it before, and the Count answered by wiping his forehead with a handkerchief, and Mielle swallowed shame by blushing under her eyes. It was better to be scolded.

However, she could not be angry or away from the place where even the Crown Prince was watching.

Cain, who had seen the situation, stepped in to mediate. "... Didn't you say you're here to get the permission?"

The topic about Mielle was not very important, so it quickly changed. Aria, who was watching Mielle's ugly scene, also looked curious. She wanted to hear it in person even though she was expecting it.

"Ah, yes."

Asher also seemed to have no intention of wasting time on useless things anymore, and he got to the point. He thought that it would be better to take a walk alone with Aria while looking around the mansion than this boring spectacle he was having with Aria's family members.

"I have already confessed to her and have a date with her, but I also thought it would be better for me to get formal permission from you. Maybe..."

He was asking permission from the Count and Countess, but his gaze was on Aria. It was as if he was asking for her permission instead.

"It's likely to be more than that. I've been talking to her in advance, but I thought it would be better to ask for your permission."

'More than that?' There was only one more thing left. Although she had expected it, she couldn't show any reaction as if she was shocked to hear such a remark directly from the Crown Prince. The difference between imagination and reality had brought silence. 'What

else can I say? I can't say no to him even if I want to.' In the garden where silence had fallen, Aria responded quietly with a smile.

"What do you think, Count and madam?"

"... Yes!? Yes, yes..." In embarrassment, the Count replied, stammering heavily. It was an unknown answer whether he liked it or not.

"Your Highness doesn't need to ask permission. If you like each other, then that's what you should do." And the Countess answered with tears in her eyes as if she had been proposed to. She prayed for a rise in status that no one had ever achieved.

It seemed like they were done eating because everyone's hands had stopped, and Aria asked Asher, who had taken a few sips of prepared tea without delay. His face was full of happiness. "Mr. Asher, why don't you take a look around the indoor garden my mother has arranged by herself?"

"Is there such a great place? I really want to look around."

"Then I'll leave first."

Aria, one of the people who should be surprised more than anyone else by what he said just now, stood up with a bright smile, and the Count nodded like a broken doll. And next to him, the Countess looked sad as if she wanted to be with her.

As soon as the two disappeared toward the indoor garden, the Countess ordered the servants and maids to hurry up and tidy up the garden and the mansion a little more. Taking advantage of the gap, Mielle called the Count who had stood up from his seat with a slightly dazed face.

"Father." Her face, when she called, looked as if she had lost the world.

"... Mielle? Is something wrong?"

'Did anything happen to make Mielle look like this?' The Count, who could not remember that even if there was something, hurried up to her, worrying. Then Mielle was wary and looked around for a moment, and then she said what was bothering her in a low voice.

"... His Highness the Crown Prince and Aria never match. No way!" Mielle sounded desperate.

"What do you mean?"

When the Count asked her as if he didn't know why, she expressed her opinion with reasons.

"You've decided to help the princess. By the way, how can you think of allowing my stepsister to date the Crown Prince? Helping the princess... wasn't that to check His Highness?"

"Yes... I did."

'Why is your answer in the past tense when you said yes?' Mielle furrowed her forehead and began to persuade the Count again.

"In addition, you are the one who has led the Aristocratic Party yourself. I can't believe you're about to have a relationship with the imperial family now...! Are you sure you don't mind if all the efforts you've made come to nothing? You're thinking of wearing that kind of shame? You're not!"

“... Mielle.”

“If you show such a disappointing appearance, I’m sure the Aristocratic Party will be scattered. They just got back together.”

“Mielle, I know what you’re thinking, so calm down a little bit.”

Mielle kept talking with great excitement, and the Count gave a light pat on her shoulder and calmed her down. It was a pat to fully understand her mind even though he didn’t understand it at all.

“Of course, I agree with you. But it’s not that easy to decide. Isn’t he the Crown Prince? Besides, he likes Aria so much, and we can take advantage of him.”

The Count, who seemed to be excited, had realized what could be gained from Aria and Asher’s relationship.

“I’ve been reporting to the Duke at last, so I’ll have to ask him for an opinion. Other nobles also agreed that it would be a waste if we kick him out.”

“... Father!”

Mielle held the Count’s sleeve to the nuance that he did not want to stop her from getting married. It was her begging, “Please don’t do that.”

“Well, I’ll go check to see if there’s anything else to prepare for, and let’s talk about it later.”

The Count had no intention of missing this rare opportunity, and it was Mielle's persuasion that was eventually thrown out. It was because of the attitude that Mr. Asher showed today that he had made up his mind. Asher's attitude, as if he would have presented the whole world to Aria, moved the Count.

"Mielle."

It was none other than Cain who called the name of Mielle while staring at the Count's disappearing back. He must have overheard the Count and Mielle's conversation, and his expression was very serious. The poor Mielle, who lost the Count, clung to her brother this time. He also had such a miserable face as if he lost his country in a crushing defeat in the war.

"Brother...!"

"Yes. Let's go up to your room first."

Unlike Mielle, Cain tried not to show what he was thinking of. 'How can he deal with the Crown Prince himself?' The angrier he got, the more miserable he would be.

In addition, Aria was his younger sister, even though they did not have any blood relation in the first place, unless the Count got divorced. And since there was no sign to estrange between the Count and Countess, he was almost in a state of abandonment.

But Mielle wasn't. She had a mission to separate Aria from Asher. It was a mission that she must succeed this time. After losing Emma, she no longer had a shield, so she had to walk on her own.

"You don't want her involved with the Crown Prince?"

Cain nodded at the straightforward question. Unlike giving up because the situation was not right, he couldn't hide his unwanted feelings.

So Mielle, who grabbed Cain's sleeve, took him to an empty lounge because she needed a helper after she had lost Emma. And she had no doubt that Cain would be a very appropriate and useful helper.

"Let's stop our father together! I'll never get her involved with the Crown Prince!"

"Mielle... what are you talking about? How can we disagree if they like each other? Even if our father opposes it, if they push ahead with it, there is nothing we can do."

Cain replied as if it was not worth discussing to Mielle, who was eager to persuade him.

"What do you mean? If things go on like this, the family of Count Roscent might be in big trouble! We might get cursed if we become traitors!"

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Chapter 161. The Scandal Of The Century, Part XI

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

“... Stop it. Our father said he’d be talking to the Duke, so he’d find a way.”

Cain was also likely to come up with a way, so he would not be branded as a traitor and also make a profit.

It was very simple. Asher had fallen in love with Aria very much, and if he would control Asher through Aria, it would be all right. It was a slightly different method from the princess, but it was one of the ways to make the Crown Prince into their doll.

It was a highly feasible plan if Aria decided to follow them. She was also a member of the Count’s family, so she would be forced to follow them. The Count and the Duke would surely try to go with that plan.

“No! You can’t do that. Never!”

Mielle shouted as if she had come up with a plan, whether she had thought of one or not. Although she was still young, it did not suit her. The image that she had only shown to Emma was sometimes revealed in unnecessary places because there was no one to show it. Cain's eyes touched her, embarrassed by the unfamiliar look.

"... What if there is a sure way to separate her from His Highness?"

"... I say again, such a way..."

"No! Brother, I have it. It's a way that will not only separate Aria from the Crown Prince, but it would also make her never be able to be with someone forever. It's a little... dangerous."

Mielle, who penetrated Cain's heart, made a bitter offer to him. She looked confident. Apparently, she was not just saying empty words.

'If that's the way it is... no matter how dangerous it may be, I wouldn't take it.' But he couldn't easily nod his head because her expression was so insidious.

* * *

Although it must be a mansion inferior to a stable compared to the Imperial Castle, Asher did not miss a single path to the garden. There were interest and admiration in his gleaming blue eyes. Aria asked Asher, avoiding people's attention,

"It's just a small mansion with nothing to see, so what's so fun here?"

"I think it's fun to think that you've been here all the time."

As for Aria, who had lived there for more than a decade and faced death, he probably meant her few years of stay in the mansion after she had entered the Count's family. Aria closed her mouth, and as soon as he noticed it, Asher hurriedly changed the topic.

"How was it today?"

"... Yes?"

"I asked if the Count and Countess were satisfied."

This time, Aria was speechless for a different reason. She was shocked to know that he had been truly trying to win their favor. It was a great honor just to make a visit...

"... Was it not good?"

Again he asked her, and Aria shook her head with a small smile.

"That's not true. I'm sure they would have liked you if you hadn't shown favor otherwise. You're in a position to do so in the first place."

"Hmm... it's a little bit disappointing to hear that since I've tried my best, but it hasn't worked."

"...!"

He had made his futile efforts, but he was pleading for praise like a child. 'Oh my God. You are a fully grown man, but why does this look so cute?'

"It's because there is no need to say that, so don't be angry."

So, saying so, she gently touched his palm. Then he reddened his ears a little and quickened his steps. He seemed embarrassed and wanted to avoid people's eyes.

After his birthday this year, the official age of Asher was much higher than her's, as they were twenty and seventeen years old, respectively, but Aria had lived a life longer than his. So it was clear that he would not be able to overcome her life experience even if he lived another lifetime.

Aria asked teasingly, "Shall we go to the indoor garden quickly?"

"... I'm ashamed, so let's do that."

Aria laughed a little louder at the sight of his cuteness and candor at the same time.

* * *

A letter with her name arrived at the mansion if it was true that the judge was interested in Aria as he had mentioned last time. The letter was sent under the name of "Frey," except for her last name, so she tore the envelope off, thinking he was a businessman who wanted to get an investment, but she could not shut her mouth after reading it.

[I'm Frey, and I'm a judge. I have no last name because I came from the Imperial Castle. I'm worried about your health. Good tea and sweets have come in, and I want to have fun and talk with Lady Roscent. Please write down a possible date on when we could meet and give me an answer.]

'Oh my God. Does she have a secret design? Did she really show interest because of the rumors, as Asher said?' It troubled her mind that Frey had been surprised to see her face in court.

‘Why was she so surprised? Does she know me? The woman from the Imperial Castel?’ Aria thought it would not be possible, but she had to meet her to confirm. She didn’t think she would do harm to her, so she wrote back a few of the earliest dates she could visit.

It didn’t take a day for the reply to arrive; it was as if she was waiting for Aria’s letter. She proposed to meet Aria on the earliest date she had sent, and that day came faster than she thought.

“Miss, you have to decorate yourself a little more gorgeously. You’re about to become the Crown Princess...”

Since Asher’s visit, Annie had been talking like that, no matter what clothes she wore, “You’re about to become a Crown Princess.” She was not the only one. From the servants and maids of the mansion to those who she did not know, they all regarded Aria much more than ever before and respected than ever.

‘It’s because Mr. Asher crossed the capital in a glorious carriage. How surprising. Though it was late, I was told that he had passed all the busy streets on purpose. It’s as if he was showing off who he was going to meet and make a rumor. I didn’t see him like that before... though he was the Crown Prince, he was still a man.’

When asked if she didn’t like it, the answer was no. He wanted to show off because he liked her, and it could be possible for her to dislike it.

“Why don’t you change your dress now?”

Aria smiled as she laughed at her nagging to wear a fancy dress without knowing where she was going. And in a moment, she heard someone calling. “The wagon’s ready, Miss.”

She put down the book she was reading at the call of the servant and got up from her seat.

'I hope it's not bad.'

Things were so easy that there was a sense of uneasiness in the place where it was not necessary. Aria, who looked at herself again in the mirror, breathed out deeply and left the mansion.

* * *

Frey's mansion was located in the suburbs. Although she was a royal family member, it was a simple house that could not be compared to the mansion of the Count. Unlike other aristocratic mansions, she could guess her pedigree because of how high her walls were.

It was only natural that Frey's mansion was small. It was because she was a royal family, not a successor. In order to protect the imperial power, only minimal support existed for the royal family, except for the Crown Prince. Sometimes it was extremely rare for the Crown Prince or the Emperor to give major posts to those who were highly trusted, but it had nothing to do with Frey, a woman.

It was a great deal of treatment for her just to get a position as a judge. Not only were there a few single female royal family members, but most of them had lived quietly with the support they got from the empire.

"Miss! It's about to arrive!" said Annie, who checked as the mansion grew closer when she looked out of the window. Annie's nervous expression was evident because it was her first visit to the imperial mansion. This was the same for Aria, who failed to grasp Frey's intentions.

Soon after Annie's words, the carriage stopped at the mansion gate. A royal guard that could be seen out of the window looked strict. However, with a very simple procedure, the guard opened the front door so that the carriage could pass through.

The carriage stopped in front of the mansion through the small but beautifully decorated garden. The voice of the driver who announced the arrival was heard. Even though the knight and Annie's eyes were on Aria, she did not go out immediately. She touched her head and clothes and asked, "Annie, how about my clothes?"

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Chapter 162. The Scandal Of The Century, Part XII

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

“Perfect!”

Even though Annie answered like that, she straightened Aria’s dress just in case. She had seen Frey once in the court, but she had invited Aria like this. Therefore, it must be because it was important.

‘I don’t know her intention, but I can’t be blamed for anything even if it’s something small.’

Not so relaxed, Aria stepped out of the carriage with her graceful figure. Frey, who had been waiting, greeted her with a warm welcome.

“You must be tired after that long journey. Come on in.”

“... Thank you for inviting me.”

She greeted Aria with a very bright look and friendly manner, contrary to her concerns. The cold-hearted judge she had seen in court was nowhere to be found. There was only a middle-aged woman with a soft smile.

Surprised by this, Aria answered slowly, but without finding fault with her, Frey led her to the lounge by herself. Aria followed her dignified steps with a straightened back.

‘As expected, she was a royal family member...’

Unlike its small size, the interior of the mansion was splendid. Each of the little ornaments on display looked like a work of art in the hands of a craftsman. Even Aria, who had had many opportunities to experience quite colorful gold and silver coins through all the parties she attended before, didn’t know what to say.

After walking around for a while, she was able to reach the lounge. There were fragrant tea and sweet snacks on the table as if they had just been prepared for Aria.

“It’s been a long time since I saw you in court. I’m sure you were surprised that you were invited by me all of a sudden. I suddenly thought of you, so I sent you a letter without realizing it. I’d like to have a little chat with you while we drink some tea. I’m afraid I will cause you some inconvenience.”

“No, thanks for inviting me.”

“I’m relieved as you say that. I’m sure you will like the tea and refreshments, which I have bought and waited to get after a long time.”

Frey said so, savoring the taste and flavor, and Aria also picked up the cup of tea and answered with a savor. As she said, it was a fragrant tea.

"It smells really good."

"It tastes even better."

"Really? I'm really looking forward to the taste."

Aria smiled softly and took the teacup to her mouth. 'Why does she serve this tasty tea?' Hiding her astonishment at Frey's favor, she tried to find out her true intentions, but it was impossible. There was no information she could get from her as she talked about the tea and the weather with a soft smile.

So Aria was waiting for the main point, drinking tea and eating snacks, and suddenly, Frey started asking strange questions, "What is your hobby?"

It was only about her hobby. Aria rolled her eyes hard and tried to find a hobby she didn't have because Frey was very curious about whether it was just a question to keep the conversation going.

"Hobby? Um... I don't think I'm into anything else. It's like reading a book."

"I see, it is reading. That's why you were so knowledgeable. You can get innate intelligence and fulfillment in reading."

"Thank you for your kind consideration."

"Well, what's your favorite food?"

Again, Frey was very curious about Aria's favorite food. Aria, still a little perplexed by her unknown intention, continued to ponder.

“My favorite food is... Well... I think it's meat.”

“I see. Meat is important for growth. Then, what is your favorite color?”

“... Blue?”

“It's a beautiful color. What's your favorite flower?”

“Tulips... and lilies.”

‘Why on earth does she ask these questions?’ Aria continuously wondered because Frey looked genuinely curious since she kept on asking these random questions. It seemed like she was asking to not just have a conversation.

They were questions and interests that she had never heard from the Count after she had come into the Count's family and met her new father. No, not even her mother had asked about her with such great interest. It was strange to receive such great attention from someone who had nothing to gain from her, and she could understand such interest if it was from the opposite sex.

“It's so mysterious.”

In addition, she could not change the topic as Frey occasionally admired or was surprised. In the end, her unpredictable actions caused Aria to feel uncomfortable in a different way than when the first time she felt uncomfortable with tension.

When she wiped her forehead with a handkerchief and expressed it, Frey hurriedly apologized after realizing that she had overreacted to the first visitor she had in the mansion. “Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to inconvenience you, but I was rude without knowing it in order to satisfy my self-interest.”

"No, it's okay."

"How can you be so broad-minded? Did you say you will be seventeen this year?"

"Yes? Oh, yes. I'll be on my upcoming birthday. "

"The timing is so similar..."

Aria cocked her head as Frey said something she could not understand... And Frey, who had shown her a soft look for a moment, asked carefully if she could ask a favor.

"Sure, why not? I don't mind as long as I can do it."

Aria thought Frey couldn't make a strange request to the first visitor she had, and making a gentle smile, she pretended to be a fine lady and said that she was willing to do that. Frey's request was possible for Aria, but it was strange.

"It's a little big in size, but it looks good... like he's back. "

"..."

Aria didn't know how to react to this, and she just kept silent. Frey asked her to wear a man's clothes! She even blushed when she saw that.

"Miss..."

Annie called Aria, pretending to fix the awkwardly dressed man's clothes because Aria had a bad look on her. Aria, speechless in various complex emotions and shocks, had to comply with Frey's demands for a moment as if she had become a doll.

She couldn't ask what the hell was going on. 'What does she mean by that lonely look?' If she were happy to see herself in a man's clothes, she would ask it.

"... I'm sorry. I didn't mean to do this, but when I saw you, I was caught up in memories, and I behaved indecently."

"... No."

She was the one who should have been shocked. However, Frey was gone while Aria was changing her clothes again, and when she returned after a long time, she had her eyes dyed red. Aria made a promise that she could no longer complain and said, "I'll go back now." She wasn't happy with the situation that was hard to understand.

"I'm so sorry I couldn't stay longer. I had a previous engagement."

"No, thank you very much for your visit. This is the tea you drank today. It's such a precious tea, so please enjoy it after your return."

"... Thank you."

Annie took the gift, and Aria, who was escorted by a knight, was about to get on the wagon.

Suddenly Frey called out Aria's name loudly. "Well, Lady Roscent!"

"... Yeah?" Aria was surprised. She looked back and saw Frey with an urgent face.

Frey seemed to be picking words for a while, and then she brought up her reason for calling Aria. "Well... didn't the Countess say anything?"

“Yes? What...?”

‘Did she know my mother?’ Aria couldn’t understand Frey’s question, so she asked back. Frey shook her head with a resigned look as if she was about to say something.

‘What the hell is that?’

“... I’m sorry. I’m not old enough to be senile, but I guess I’m already senile even if that’s very unlikely.”

“Miss. Frey... What are you talking about...? I don’t really...”

“No, you’re late, so you’d better get back.”

Then Frey told her to head home carefully and disappeared into the mansion before Aria could even get on the wagon.

“What the hell was that?”

Annie asked for what Aria wanted to ask in the returning carriage. However, the one that was supposed to answer Aria’s question was already gone, so only silence remained in the wagon.

Aria was so nervous when she accepted the invitation, but she had only experienced so many unthinkable things that she could not earn a little. Feeling confused, Aria headed straight to the mansion.

* * *

After arriving at the mansion, she was a little tired from her nervousness. She took a rest for a while and went down to the dining room at dinner time. Soon after the meal began, the brother and sister began to oppress the Count as if they had prepared in advance.

“Father, I don’t think it’s good to have a connection with the Crown Prince.”

“Cain, haven’t I said I have already finished talking to other nobles?”

“You’d better reconsider,” Cain replied with a determined look.

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Chapter 163. The Scandal Of The Century, Part XIII

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

As if he was frustrated, the Count put the fork down loud on the table and got angry. “That’s not a matter for you to get involved in! That’s what Aria’s will is already, and I’ve also given my approval as the head of the count family!”

Mielle’s fine hand stopped him as he tried to raise his voice in rebuttal.

“Brother, there is nothing we can do as our father decided that. He is the head of the count family, right?” But her face was so grim that she also showed great opposition to it.

‘But what is your reason for stopping Cain?’ Slowly chewing the salad, Aria observed Mielle.

And Cain called her name with a groan, “... Mielle.”

“Have dinner before it cools down, brother.”

Cain, who followed his sister's words rather than his father's, glanced Aria and quietly kept eating. But Aria had a lot on her mind because of the strange things that had happened during the day, and even Cain and Mielle empowered her concerns and questions, so Aria left the dining room without finishing her meal properly.

Aria, who went back to her room thinking it would be better to have a cup of tea to cool her mind and go to bed, was appalled at the sight of a stranger in her room.

"Who...?!"

"Shh."

As Aria was surprised and was about to scream, an uninvited strange visitor hurried up and gently wrapped around her waist. With the other hand, he lightly closed her mouth to buy time for a while so that she could not get stuffy.

"Lady Aria, it's me."

The voice sounded urgent. Still, it was a familiar voice. So Aria opened her tightly closed eyes and checked the intruder's face.

Then she saw the face of Asher with a soft glow. Who could believe that it was Asher who was in her room, as he had been the main topic of the conversation of the people of the count family after she had just come to her room after dinner? Aria, who saw him in front of her, blinked and expressed embarrassment.

"Do you recognize me?"

Aria quickly blinked at Asher's question and expressed her sympathy. It was because her mouth was still blocked. When he read Aria's recognition, Asher took off his hand and breathed a sigh as if he were relieved.

"... How...?"

'Why did you come here?' As Aria, still perplexed, asked. Asher looked very disappointed and said,

"Didn't I tell you that I'd be here today?"

'Did you say that?' She forgot because she hadn't been so busy lately.

It seemed that Asher had said he'd come again but was it today? The timing was truly exquisite. It made her shudder because it would have been possible for him to have appeared while he was with her maids.

"I'm sorry. I've had so much to think about lately that I've forgotten..."

So she apologized briefly, because she thought that he could not appear suddenly without a promise, and she thought it would be her fault this time. Then Asher, who turned over her golden hair on Aria's forehead, smiled affectionately and replied, "It's okay."

She must have been sweating because she had been nervous. Though his hands were very friendly and warm, her heart began to beat a little faster.

"What made you feel so hard like this?"

"Ah... just this and that..."

The biggest problem of all was Frey's work today. Come to think of it, he had talked to her about Frey's interest in advance.

Looking at her, who was still tense and anxious because of her troubles and Asher's touch, he carefully sat her down on the sofa, poured some water, and asked again, "Can't you tell me about it?"

"No, it's not like that... it just happened a little absurd."

Instead, Asher was the only one to confide in, so Aria began to carefully talk about what had been embarrassing today. The letter had arrived from Frey and she had visited her mansion, and after a series of questions, she had finally handed her a man's suit and asked her if she could try it on.

When she explained that far, he was also perplexed by his expression. Even if he said that the story was made up, there was nothing to look strange, and the situation was not common.

He cocked his head and said, "That's strange. She's not the kind of person who did such a thing to the person who first visited."

Aria responded by adding a little strength to her voice, "But it's all true. My maid, Annie, also saw that."

"Oh, I don't doubt it. I was just thinking about why she did it. I didn't see her often, but I didn't think she was the kind of person."

Asher hastened to make an excuse. Surely it was unbelievable to think of her as a judge. Therefore, he furrowed his forehead for a while in distress and said as if he had come up with something.

"So I heard that she has a brother who was kicked out. I think she might remember her brother when she saw you."

"Her brother?"

"I don't remember the details because it happened to me when I was a kid... there's a royal family who's been kicked out for an unpleasant incident, and I know it's her brother."

"... My god. Then the clothes I wore?"

"Maybe it's her brother's clothes."

"By the way, not her sister, but her brother? Why did she think of her brother as a woman?" Aware of Aria's question, Asher added an explanation,

"I happened to see his portrait when I was very young. He looked quite noticeable. When I first saw you, I had a sense of déjà vu that I saw somewhere, but I think he's a little bit like you."

"He looks like me...?"

Then, she could understand why she had done that, but... it did not make any sense to... 'Isn't it strange to ask me to try on the clothes of her brother, who was kicked out of the Imperial Castle, with only a slight resemblance to his face?'

"While the hair and eye colors are different, the features and the atmosphere seem to be the same. I only saw him in a portrait, so I don't know his real appearance."

‘If the atmosphere and features resemble each other, most of them are similar.’ She was embarrassed that she looked like a man, not a woman, and hurriedly took a mirror and examined her face. She was worried that her face might have changed without her knowledge. Fortunately, however, the beautiful face remained.

‘As a woman, my life is so complicated. There is a man with such a beautiful face... I can see why he was kicked out of the Imperial Castle...’

Aria, who was nervous, looked into her face for a long time and asked Asher, who was watching the action for some time.

“If you are nervous, shall I find out what happened? Maybe I can get a portrait.”

“I’d appreciate it, but... I’m afraid you’re busy.”

“It’s okay because I’m not the one who will get it.”

Aria, who had been frowned upon all the time, burst into a small laugh. As he said, it was the men under him who would become busy. It would be Lane.

Rather, Asher had a look of joy at being able to help Aria. Even so, he was cute when he said he would drive his subordinates hard, but not himself.

“I hope they don’t hate me.”

“Where is anyone who would hate you?”

‘Well, there are too many.’ Right now, even in the mansion, there was a girl in the mansion who hated her and wanted to kill her. She had hated her so much, even in the past when she had done nothing, but now she wondered how much she would hate her. As Aria’s

mouth went down again because she thought of Mielle, his expression also became serious.

“You must have a person in your mind.”

“... Nobody is loved by everyone.”

“No matter how hard it is, it’s rare for a person to come up in an instant and make a smile disappear.”

‘Yes. Unless they are in a grudging relationship, it’s not.’ There was a momentary silence in the room because both of them had such a person. She wished there were refreshments, but unfortunately, the only thing on the table was cold water, which made her feel awkward. It was then that she was thinking about bringing tea out.

“Miss! I’ve brought tea!”

Annie’s voice was heard outside the door. Because it was time for Aria to return from her meal. Aria, who was thinking about what to do with Asher’s presence, quickly talked to Annie to come in.

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Chapter 164. Revenge (III), Part I

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

Annie hadn't seen him show up in person, and Aria thought Annie would never tell anyone that he had come because she still had a lot to get from herself. Besides, even if she would speak, they had already declared official dating, and what would be a problem?

"The tea you got as a gift... Huck!"

Annie, who entered the room in Aria's call, found him as a matter of course and became as rough as she was in surprise, and Aria rebuked her,

"What are you doing there? I was just about to get thirsty, but that's great."

"Yes? Yes..."

Annie wanted to ask how he had been here, but she was quick-witted, so she prepared refreshments without asking otherwise. Of course, she tried to listen and get even a little bit of information, but the important conversation was over and, to make matters worse, she couldn't get any information because Aria asked her to leave the room.

"Is it a Bacchians black tea? That's a great tea. It's not easy to get."

"Oh, Miss Frey gave it to me as a visiting gift."

"... That's what it is. She must have liked you enough to give you such a precious tea as a present. I'll be sure to find out more about her brother."

After enjoying the tea for a short time, Asher got up from his seat, saying, "I have to go now."

"Are you going now?"

"It's already too late at night. It's too late to be alone with a woman. I was just going to check your face and go back."

When Aria was very sorry, he smiled and held her hand.

"I'll be back next week at the same time. Please don't forget this time."

And as usual, he kissed Aria's hand and disappeared. When she called Annie back to clear the table a little later, she responded with a hidden response and asked Aria, with her mouth wide open.

"... My god. Where did he come in? I didn't see him coming. No, where else did he disappear?"

"He came through the window and went out."

"Re, really!?"

"Every time you make a fuss if he comes. That's all he has to do to drink the tea quietly, isn't it?"

Indeed, there was no other way but to get through the window, so Annie, who believed Aria, shut her mouth and was amazed.

"Well, that's right...! But I think it's too dangerous."

"You don't have to worry about it because he said it's his specialty."

When she mentioned in a nuance that she no longer wanted to comment on this issue, Annie replied, "I understand." Then she took out another topic.

"Oh, come to think of it, Miss Mielle seemed to have exchanged letters with the princess again. According to the maid who glanced over the contents, she said the princess praised Miss Mielle."

"... Really?"

'What else did she do? Did the princess praise Mielle for her passionate opposition to the relationship between Asher and me recently? Or is she up to something bad about it?' Judging from the maid's testimony that she had been exchanging letters with the princess before she could do anything bad, Aria thought it would be unusual.

"If anything happens in the future, please tell the maid to tell me. And give a small gift to her."

"Yes, yes. Miss! Don't worry. Everyone in the mansion is already on your side."

'As Annie says, everyone is on my side, unlike in the past, but why am I so anxious? Is it because of the princess who is plotting behind her? Or is it because there is no sure thing that can certainly get rid of Mielle? Yeah, maybe this is a chance. I can use it as a counterpoint for Mielle to do something bad.'

Unlike in the past, when there was nothing to lose, now with much in hand, the clumsy act of poisoning could not get rid of Mielle. Aria had no choice but to hope that Mielle would choose the path of self-destruction, as she had done to Emma last time.

A few days later, it must have been true that Mielle was plotting something, and ladies gathered at the mansion. It was because of a tea party hosted by Mielle. It was an unprecedented scale, so she wanted to refrain from going out, but she couldn't.

"Miss, you're running out of time."

"... Yes."

It was because today was the day to award scholarships to students at the academy. Aria also had to attend because she was providing huge scholarships.

Of course, it wouldn't matter if she sent an agent, but a good image of herself was just beginning to spread. It was necessary not only to meet prospective businessmen at the mansion but to show up here and there in a rush.

"Are you going out?"

Mielle spoke softly to Aria, who came down the first floor alone.

‘I’m sure the last conversation ended in a curse.’ Aria, with a laugh, answered yes, and Mielle folded her eyes softly and asked again. It was a sweet smile she had never seen recently.

“When will you be back?”

“Well, I don’t think I’m coming in today?”

So when she managed to resist the delirium coming out, she answered with a false answer, and Mielle’s face, which was like a fluffy petal, quickly turned icy cold.

“... Really?”

“Really or not, is there an obligation to report it to you? When were we supposed to be like that?”

Despite the fact that there were other ladies around Mielle, she turned around in a cruel way. They were women who she had no need to look good anyway and had no advantage from.

“... My God, how vulgar of speech!”

“Who the hell is calling her an empire star?”

“Isn’t it a falling star? A falling star with a long tail hanging out.”

“Maybe.”

“Oh, poor Lady Mielle...”

At their whispering voices, Annie gritted her teeth and uttered a small curse. At the same time, there was a compliment on how to deal with such bad girls and deal with them so resolutely.

‘I can’t be resolute.’

There was already a lot of sweat on her hands.

It wasn’t simply because there was a quarrel with Mielle. It was thanks to her overreacting to her answer that she would not come back today. It was clear that Mielle was going to do something today, as she had worried.

* * *

“You’re here.”

When she arrived at the academy, Baron Burboom welcomed Aria with a bright smile.

Then, by giving Annie a look right behind her, he announced that their relationship had progressed very much. Aria smiled brightly and said, “Would you like some time to talk with Annie?”

“... Yes? Oh, no!”

So when she made fun of him for nothing, the Baron of Burboom was so startled that he shook his hands. Annie pretended to be indifferent, fanning. It was then when she was going to make a little more fun of them because it was so cute.

“Lady Aria!”

Someone called Aria's name. When she turned to the place where she could hear the voice, there was Sarah in full dress. People's eyes were on her with the three knights, perhaps because she couldn't come with the busy Marquis of Vincent.

"Lady Sarah...?"

'But why did she come here? I didn't send her an invitation, and it's not a great event to honor.' Furthermore, there had even been no Marquis Vincent, who had always followed her, worried.

'Why on earth?' Aria couldn't hide her embarrassment because she couldn't grasp her intentions, but Sarah smiled softly and handed over the letter she was holding in her hand to Aria.

"It's a reply. I think it's a little late. It was partly because I was thinking about it, and it was because I persuaded the Marquis."

'Reply? ... Don't tell me, the letter I asked you to be a teacher at the academy last time!?' She had thought her reply was a little late, but she had thought Sarah had to consider the political position, too, so she couldn't help it.

However, she didn't expect her to bring it herself. And that kind of benevolent face she had! She had thought Sarah wouldn't turn it down because it was her request, but it was true that she was inwardly anxious. Aria rushed to open the letter she had received from Sarah. The content was very concise. Nevertheless, it struck Aria's fancy.

[I'll accept the offer of the lovely Lady Aria.]]


'... How can I not like Sarah?'

Since reading Sarah's letter, there was no Aria who, as the empire's star and Investor A, had pretended to be graceful in the eyes of people.

"I can't refuse your offer as you are doing such a good thing."

"Sarah...!"

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Chapter 165. Revenge (III), Part II

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

Aria, who had forgotten the time and place before Sarah's words had finished, hugged her. The Baron of Burboom, who had never seen Aria like this, opened his eyes round and hardened like a stone.

"I'm surprised that you remembered my dream that I once mentioned before. I thought I was too far from my dream, so I forgot, but I can't believe I had a chance like this." said Sarah, stroking Aria's hair. She looked so touched that it would not be strange for her to shed tears right away, unlike just now, when she had kept her face calm all the time.

Now Aria had grown into an adult at the outer appearance and it looked very strange, but Sarah and Aria fell into a world of their own, without being aware of their surroundings.

But no one laughed at them. They didn't know what they were talking about, but who could laugh at them when they relied on each other?

"Wouldn't the Marquis of Vincent hate me?"

“That’s not true. The Marquis of Vincent likes you very much. “Even at a young age, she’s great,” he said, praising you. He was just worried that you have something to do with the Crown Prince.”

Sarah answered so and looked around. She seemed to be concerned because it was a political story. And the knights of Aria and Sarah, who noticed the signs, surrounded them to block the eyes around them, but they were not enough to even block the conversation.

Aria grabbed Sarah’s hand and urged her to go inside. The wary Baron Burboom hurriedly changed the seats for Aria and Sarah, and because of that, Aria was free to talk to Sarah throughout the ceremony.

“And this is a secret... I thought I’d tell you... Actually, the Duke of Frederick has visited the Marquis several times.”

“... the Duke?”

“Yes. I think he has visited not only the Marquis but also the others. Those are the ones who stay neutral. He also came to my father even though he was a humble family.”

“... Oh my gosh.”

‘Is it because the princess failed to make such a remarkable achievement, or is it because of the power of Asher?’ Perhaps it was both, but it was not an easy matter to see that even the Duke moved in person, unlike in the past.

‘... Will Mr. Asher be all right?’

‘Does he know this fact? I think he’s working on something because he’s so busy that he can barely see my face.’ She believed he would do well on his own, but she could not rest assured that he had been helpless in the past. She hoped she could get him to know this as soon as possible... She was impatient because there was still a little time left before his visit.

Sarah added, holding Aria’s hand to see if it was revealed on her face. “That’s why the Marquis made up his mind.”

“... Did he determine?”

“Yes, the situation is that he can’t keep neutral anymore.”

It was not necessary to ask which side of the group he was supposed to be supportive. If the Marquis of Vincent stood by the Duke’s side, Sarah wouldn’t be here.

Aria asked Sarah with a little relief, “Did anyone else make up their mind like the Marquis did?”

“Maybe? They’ve often visited the Marquis. Until recently. They were all great people who loved their country.”

If so, it meant that they were not on the side of the Duke to abandon the country and join hands with a foreign country. It was only then that Aria, who was relieved, was able to recover her original face when Sarah added that other novels, who had been neutral, including the Marquis, seemed to have met Asher.

Still, the reason she felt uncomfortable was that she heard the news from Sarah, not from Asher. Even if he would talk to her, she would not say anything to others around, but he had not said anything. He had just said, “I’m doing well.”

‘I think I should say something when I meet him this time.’

With such determination, she again straightened her back and smiled gracefully.

Nevertheless, Aria, who did not hide her benevolence, proudly rose to the podium. As Aria ascended to the podium, countless students who were indebted to Aria stared at her with respect and awe. She called one and one to give mercy, and she called Hans’s name for the last time.

He had already been awarded another scholarship for his outstanding grades, and he was with a puzzled look at why his name was called again.

“I promise to support your living expenses, including scholarships, until you graduate, because you have excellent grades and you are intelligent.”

As soon as Aria’s words were over, the audience was in a state of uproar. This was because it was an unprecedented support. It was not just a scholarship, but a support for balancing the living cost. He didn’t work even for what the academy intended.

Aria, who smiled softly at Hans, who was perplexed, soon turned to see where Jessie was. She wasn’t even supported, but she was thrilled with her mouth shut. It was only a penny at the most.

“Hans, I didn’t make this decision just out of past relationships, so I hope you don’t feel burdened and accept it.”

‘It’s only when you do well that Jessie is happy.’

Finally, Aria, who patted Hans lightly on the shoulder, came down from the podium with everyone’s praise. Hopefully, he would develop as much ability as he got support.

* * *

After the ceremony, she had a long conversation with Sarah and was on her way back. She could see Annie's chest opposite her with a strange brooch.

'Come to think of it, the students at the academy are wearing it. What's that?'

When she was curious and asked, Annie, replied with a significant smile.

"You're just beginning to notice, aren't you? It's a feat of my loyalty to you!"

"What does that mean?"

When Aria asked again for the answer that she did not understand, Annie began to tell the long story.

"Isn't this similar to the brooch you first gave me?"

"That's right."

"In fact, I bragged that I got this brooch from you! I told them it was the evidence of your recognition. And they were all jealous. So..."

"So?"

As Annie took some time to say, even Jessie pricked up her ears and showed her interest. The knight who rode the wagon together didn't show up his interest, but he also seemed to be curious about it.

Annie opened her chest wide and said, "I made a similar but cheap brooch, to give to those who are loyal to you."

"So, they're kind of followers of Miss Aria, right?"

When asked by Jessie, cocking her head, Annie raised her voice, saying, "Yes! Other forces and groups all have their own emblem. Well... the common people don't have that, do they? So I thought, 'let's make it too!' I made it for the purpose of doing it. Oh, my God. I didn't expect so many people to follow Miss Aria!"

"Because Miss Aria is such a worthy person."

Jessie, who answered as if it were right, reached out her hand, asking for one. Annie looked at Aria's face and said, "I'll give it to you later."

'You sold it.'

Aria was sure Annie would have sold it. Even the cheapest brooch would cost money to make, so it was worth it, but it had been done without mentioning anything to her master herself.

'Yes, I'll overlook your fault just this time.'

It was a great thing to do because there was nothing like an emblem to bring people together. Aria also liked her fast report of telling the truth. By the time she got to the mansion, the sun was already going down, because she had quite a long chat with Sarah.

The young ladies who had come before her leaving the mansion as Mielle's guests were still not going back, filling the garden and enjoying tea parties. For a tea party hosted by a minor, the time was quite long.

As soon as Aria got off the wagon, the keen gaze of the ladies gathered around her and fell to her. There were also a mix of adult women in it, who really didn't know who they were.

"Are you enjoying your party?"

Aria greeted such foolish women with a graceful gesture. The only thing that was better than the common people was to pretend to be noble. Nevertheless, it was to remind them that they were shallower in their behavior than the common people.

"... Of course, it's a party invited by such a noble lady."

Ashamed of this, the young ladies bristled up. They disparaged Aria without knowing that it was a ship that sank due to holes everywhere.

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Chapter 166. Revenge (III), Part III

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

“Oh, my God, you’re wearing a very unusual bracelet, aren’t you? Is it a popular bracelet among the common people?”

‘How faultless I am!’ A young lady went so far as to insult the bracelet she was wearing. ‘You don’t know who gave the bracelet to me.’

She seemed very curious, so Aria smiled softly, and answered, “Unusual, isn’t it? It’s a bracelet from the Crown Prince.”

“...!”

Although they were hostile to the Crown Prince, he was the Crown Prince.

She insulted the gift of the one who would become the Emperor. If Aria told him the truth, she would be punished for insulting the royal family.

But because she no longer felt the value of dealing with these stupid women, Aria looked around, ignoring her pale face. At the center of the crowd was a bright-faced Mielle.

‘What the hell are you going to do?’

Aria spoke to Annie to get Mielle’s routine today and went up to her room. She then ordered the cleaning again in case of any danger she didn’t know and opened the window wide to pay attention to the garden, and nothing happened, whether it was unfortunate or not.

“Miss, she has been enjoying the party, but she hasn’t taken any other action.”

So did Annie’s report. Aria was all the more subdued by the report that Mielle had not done anything unusual.

‘Isn’t that I’m so nervous for nothing?’

Nevertheless, she read a book in her hands, looking out the window, and she could see the Count coming home late at night.

It was also noticed that Mielle, who was enjoying the party, greeted the Count with a smile, and that Cain, who followed him, glanced up at her room. The real Count family went into the mansion with a smile.

As the usual scene of everyday life caught her eye, the tension gradually disappeared. So she was sighing for relief and trying to relax, but someone knocked on the door.

“Sister, I have something to say.”

It was Mielle. Once again her whole body was in a state of tension.

“What brings you here?”

“Come out and look.”

“I’m changing my clothes, so tell me there.”

“I’ll wait, then.”

Mielle’s reply was firm. If it was, as usual, she would have ordered a maid, but would she wait outside the door?

Aria picked up a box of the hourglass in doubt that something bad might happen. ‘Let’s turn the hourglass around as soon as something happens,’ she opened the door with such determination.

“... What do you want to say?”

Then she saw the Count behind Mielle. He also had a face that said he did not know the reason. Mielle, who was looking at the box Aria was holding for a moment, smiled awkwardly and called her out saying that she wanted to talk together. It was so strange.

So it was then that she slowly stepped out of the room and approached the Count’s side, giving strength to the box that carried the hourglass. Suddenly, Mielle pushed the Count down as hard as she could from the edge of the stairs. It happened very quickly.

“...?”

“...!”

The Count falling under the stairs tried to hold Aria's wrist reflexively, but what he caught was not her wrist, but the end of the bracelet that was given by Asher. Only Aria's bracelet fell to the ground with the Count, and Mielle screamed,

"Somebody! Somebody, help me! My sister pushed my father on the stairs!"

'Are you really crazy?' Aria didn't know Mielle was going to push her father down the stairs, so Aria, whose legs were loosened, sank to the floor. Aria thought Mielle would kill her if she did, but she hurt her own father!

'The, the hourglass...!'

The shock shook the hand that opened the box. It was a very short time, but it felt like a thousand years. Her heart was thumping enough to pop out. Fortunately, she soon opened the box and got her hand on the hourglass, and as she was trying to turn it around in a hurry, someone popped up in the middle of this misery like a vision.

"Lady Aria?"

It was Asher with a pale face. 'Why did you show up so recklessly when you had someone else?'

The Count that fell down the stairs, Miele, whose eyes were round when she saw him, and Aria, who fell on the floor...

As soon as he saw through all this, he took Aria's hand. Then he disappeared, leaving behind a screaming Mielle. Only the Count and Mielle were left in the crowd of those who came to ask what was going on.

* * *

The misery that Mielle pushed the Count down the stairs quickly turned into a forest. It was a bit of a familiar forest now. There was also a mansion in front of her, decorated a little more beautiful than last time with various flowers and ornaments.

“Lady, Lady Aria! Can you hear me? Where did you get hurt...?”

Next to her, Asher kept calling Aria’s name. She didn’t hurt at all, but he looked pale as if he was about to fall. It seemed as if it were a vision.

“Lady Aria?”

The anxious voice of Asher calling her name sounded clear in her ears, but she could not respond as if she could not hear it.

Mielle, who was pushing her father away without a moment of hesitation, and the Count, who reached out to her with wide-open eyes at the moment he fell, and Asher, who appeared at that incredible moment... The unthinkable happened one after another, and after many more calls from Asher, Aria came to her senses.

“Mr. Asher...”

As Aria, who tried to rise from her seat in haste, fell back to the ground because she didn’t have any strength on her body, so he hurriedly supported her.

“Are you all right?”

“What? Yeah... I’m fine.”

Aria, who blinked a few times to find herself, checked her hand. Fortunately, the hourglass was in her hand. She had to turn this hourglass around and go back to before Mielle had pushed the Count. So when she came to her room, she wouldn't open the door, pretended she wasn't there, and she would turn everything that had happened...!

"..."

Just as she was about to turn the hourglass around, Aria stiffened at the thought of it.

'... How long has it been?'

She hadn't had a clue of how long it had been since Mielle had pulled the Count.

The time to return with the hourglass was only five minutes. It was a very short time, so she always checked and calculated the pocket watch before using it, but she couldn't check it because what had just happened was quite an instant.

Even at this moment when she was thinking about whether she could go back to the past, her hesitation grew bigger and bigger as time was running for one second, two seconds, and so on.

'In addition, if I turn back the hourglass here... I'm going to stay here alone.'

As Aria had experienced, when she turned back the hourglass, everyone around her returned to the past five minutes ago, but she stayed the same. 'What if she turned back the hourglass and she stayed in the woods, and after her bracelet was broken when Mielle pushed the Count from the stairs, time would turn back to when he appeared in the mansion?'

It would be the worst situation. With the hourglass, she couldn't solve the current situation, so she had to stay calm and find another way.

"You'd better enter the mansion first."

Asher's worried voice rang from her head. He was supporting her, but she was still sitting on the dirt ground. She was about to get up with a nod of her head, and then she had a sense of déjà vu.

'... So how did Mr. Asher appear in the spot?'

How did he appear? It wasn't the day he was supposed to visit, and it wasn't her room. He had appeared right next to Aria as if he had known what had happened.


Maybe... if he hadn't come, she could have turned the hourglass around and escaped the situation. When she thought that way, her voice popped out with a little bit of resentment and anger. It was because she thought that he had interfered.

"... How did you get there? It wasn't the day you promised."

Then Asher took a little time and answered, "... It was because the bracelet was broken."

"The bracelet?"

"... Actually, I enchanted the bracelet that I gave to you. So I'll know if anything goes wrong. But then it suddenly went off... knowing that the bracelet is broken... I was surprised if something went wrong with you."

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Chapter 167. Revenge (III), Part IV

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

She had thought it was unusual, but she hadn't thought it had such a deep meaning. Now it wasn't surprising that there was such magic—moving through space and turning back time—and that it was a simple magic.

‘What else can I blame him, who said he was worried and ran straight ahead without delay, for? Even his ability that he had been hiding all the time had been revealed.

If it had not been Mielle alone who had been there, but dozens, no, hundreds... Aria overlapped her hands in the hands of Asher, who wrapped her shoulder.

“... Thank you for coming.”

A subdued voice came out with a bit of trembling. It was simply because of the fact that he had come, and she had no way to undo this misery that dominated her mind and was angry without knowing it, and she was so sorry. ‘Is there anyone else in the world who would worry so much about me as much as him?’ No, she could affirm that there was no one else.

After a brief pause in Aria's frank confession, Asher suddenly embraced her tightly. He held Aria in his arms, fearing that she might disappear at any moment.

"Thank you very much for being safe."

In the darkened woods, the two felt precious to each other for a long time.

* * *

"No, I just thought I was too shameless. You are still so young and innocent..."

'Oh, my God. If the other guy said that, I'd slap him on the cheek, but you... why are you so cute? You don't even know that I'm much older and not pure.'

If it were not for the situation, she might have answered that it would be okay for him to be shameless. She didn't know what he had come up with, but she also thought she might have answered that it was okay for him to do so.

He kept his eyes in the air and didn't move for a while. Then he reached out to Aria with a face that said, "Nothing happened," as if he had admitted his shameless self.

"Shall we go?"

As soon as Aria, who smiled at him, nodded, the two disappeared in an instant from the small villa in the forest.

* * *

"How—how can you be here in this shabby place when you are a noble...?"

Because of the Crown Prince, who suddenly appeared in the middle of the night, a Viscount managing a small estate that was quite far away from the capital appeared like the wind. This was because he was told that a beautiful woman and the Crown Prince, who showed up without a single servant, were looking for him.

Perhaps he was about to go to bed, but without proper clothing, he visited a restaurant where the Crown Prince waited. He was in a hurry, and he was short of breath though he had ridden a wagon. Asher didn't care about this, and he didn't feel sorry for him at all.

"I'm sorry if I had come this late at night. Maybe it's a small estate, so there's no place to stay."

He added a word, hitting his glass against Aria's glass on the other side. His eyes were filled with affection.

"I don't know if I'm alone, but my lover is with me."

The eyes of the Viscount were naturally directed at Aria.

"...!"

'Oh my God, can a woman of this world be this beautiful?'

All he could see was her beautiful appearance even though she wore clothes and jewelry that were clearly the finest. Any rhetoric in the world would be insufficient. For this reason, the Viscount was simply absent-minded and was drawn to her, forgetting that she came with the Crown Prince.

"Well, I don't like that eye of yours."

As soon as the Crown Prince gave a light tap on the table, the Viscount hardened his body. He quickly found his fault and bowed his head to the ground.

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry! I’ll take you to the castle right away...!”

He must not have been that incompetent than Asher thought, and since he had done a single act of disrespect to Aria, like a moth caught in the light, he had thoroughly controlled his actions.

“Mr. Asher, I don’t have any gold coins because I didn’t bring my servant. What do I do?”

Aria spewed out a very graceful expression for her lack of money. The fancy jewelry on her wrist, which held the glass, became shinier as the light was reflected to it. Selling it alone was enough to buy most of the stores on this estate.

“I see. Then I’ll have to buy it on credit.”

But if Aria’s ornaments were not even visible, Asher answered calmly. At the words of the Crown Prince’s plan to make a credit, the Viscount raised his voice in amazement.

“Oh, no! I’ll pay for it! Oh, no! Let me pay!”

But Asher shook his head lightly because he had to buy it on credit.

“No, put it in my name. Write down the date and the current time, too. I’ll send a servant to pay for it later.”

“Yes...? Yes, yes...”

It wasn't an amount that he couldn't pay. It was necessary to intentionally buy it on a credit and leave a trace. That was why Asher called the Viscount in the middle of the night.

It would take them half a day from here to the Roscent mansion in the capital even if they rode a horse without stopping. In other words, if they started to run a horse by the time the sun set, they would arrive a little bit before midnight.

There was still a little time until midnight, but they were going to leave a trace here on purpose to leave a piece of evidence that Aria had left the capital without staying in the mansion.

Of course, it was best to cross the border right away, but it would take two more days to get to the nearest kingdom, the Kingdom of Croa, even if they rode a horse. Therefore, they had to leave a piece of evidence inside the country first. After all, the timid Viscount could no longer express his opinion and ordered the restaurant owner to make a credit account.

[Eleven o'clock in the afternoon. His Highness the Crown Prince Franz Asterope, Lady Aria of the Roscent family: Five golds on credit.]

Asher, who checked their credit book that even had the restaurant owner's signature, left his signature on it. Then he handed over the book to Aria and suggested that she should sign it as well.

"What is certain is good. Isn't that right, Lady Aria?"

In fact, if anyone who didn't know their relationship saw it, they might laugh at it for asking the woman who accompanied him to sign the credit account.

But Aria signed it as if it was only natural, and the two had a very pleasant look on their faces. The witnesses said, "This may be the trend in the capital city," and accepted it.

"Don't you ever lose it until my servant comes to pay for it. Do you understand?"

"Yes, yes!"

How dare he lose a book signed by the Crown Prince himself?

In addition, the woman who accompanied him, if any, was Lady Aria of the Roscent family. They had heard rumors that she was dating the Crown Prince, but they had never thought that they would show up like this. The eyes, ears, and minds of the people gathered there were busy because there were two celebrities.

"You must be tired of moving for half a day, so you'd better take a break."

"Let's do that."

Asher and Aria, who had intentionally told some stories to them, asked for a place to rest for themselves.

"... Of course! I'll get it for you right away!"

The quick-witted Viscount immediately guided Asher and Aria to his castle. Although it was a very small estate, the lord had a castle because he was a lord. Aria, who had been treated with a hearty reception and was ready for bed, lay in bed and shut her eyes for a while, but she couldn't fall asleep and got up from the bed.

'Is it because of the feeling of alcohol?'

The champagne had very little alcohol, but alcohol was alcohol. Unlike in the past, when she used to drink alcohol like water, it was her first drink. Maybe that was why she couldn't fall asleep because she was burning up as if she had a fever.

"Is there any good place where I could freshen up for a bit?"

"Oh, yes! We have an indoor garden. We keep the windows open at night for ventilation, so you can get some fresh air."

She thought she couldn't sleep like that, so she headed to the indoor garden under the guidance of the maid. Aria, who arrived in the indoor garden, opened her eyes wide at what she saw. It was past midnight, so she thought there would be no one else there...

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Chapter 168. Revenge (III), Part V

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

For some reason, Asher was already there. ‘Can he not sleep, too?’ There were quite a few papers in his hands. Asher came strolling toward Aria in embarrassment. Aria was wearing a simple dress and a single outer garment.

“Do you feel uncomfortable, Lady Aria?”

“Not at all. It’s a lot more comfortable here than the Roscent mansion. I just came out because I couldn’t sleep. I drank some alcohol.”

With the utmost service of the Viscount, she liked the accommodation. It was a small castle in a small land but inside it was clean and pleasant, and the bed was gaudy. What was more, she was with someone who she could be at peace with.

She was annoyed by the fact that she was causing trouble for the busy man, but she decided to accept it because it was not a usual thing that happened every day, and he seemed to be wondering how to help her.

“You’re burning up.”

The hand of Asher touched Aria’s cheeks. The cold hands of the night air felt good, and as she lightly rubbed her cheeks, Asher’s eyes narrowed.

“... Still, I think you’d better be in your room. The night is dangerous.”

She was surprised by his subdued voice and tone, but she answered him as if she didn’t know because she wanted to talk to him a little more even though she knew that the danger he was referring to was himself and not the outside world.

“Why? There’s Mr. Asher here.”

“ ... ”

‘What else can he refute when she answers this naively?’

Finally, with a deep sigh, Asher escorted Aria to the table where he had just been reviewing the documents.

“You have to go back as soon as your fever cools.”

Of course, he didn’t give up completely on sending Aria back to her room.

Aria replied with a smile, “Ok, by the way, what are you doing this late at night? ... Is it because of me?”

“Ah... yes. I was going to tell you tomorrow morning, but I’d better tell you now.”

“What happened?”

"Yes, I went to the capital to look into the situation there for a while, and I heard that the family of Count Roscent had filed a complaint with the guards."

"..."

She expected that, but it was already... There was a grin on the fast-paced situation as if it were ready. If he really hadn't come, she would have been caught without proof, and she clenched her fist.

Asher wrapped her soft fists and added, "Don't worry. As you said, the participants at the tea party have become witnesses. Fortunately, they seemed to think you were still in the capital city, so they were only looking for you there. No rumors have spread."

"... You mean I've become a criminal for now."

"For now, that's the case. So we need to rush across the border to make sure."

Although evidence had already been made, it was better to go around and make the evidence more clearly. Also, it was much better outside the country than at home.

'It won't be difficult since Asher has the power.'

As she thought so and tried to relax, Aria suddenly remembered that if he used his power, he would pay just as he did.

"...!"

'How many times have you used your power? Is that okay?' She had to sleep all day long after using the hourglass. 'How many times did you use it today?'

Aria became worried and asked Asher, "Are you all right? How many times have you used your power...?"

"This distance is fine. It's not that far away."

"I'm glad to hear that, but..."

Unlike Aria, who could only use her power once a day, he could control the distance of his power on his own, so the price for using his power seemed to be different. Still, it was true that she was worried, so she spread her fists and held the hands of Asher.

"It's not enough for you to worry, so you can relax. You should go to bed as soon as possible. You have to get up early in the morning."

"... I see."

Aria did not return to her room but waited for a long time for him to turn the documents and review them before returning with him.

* * *

Aria and Asher left early in the morning, and someone knocked on the door of the office of the Viscount, where he was enjoying his leisure. When he answered, "Come in," one of his faithful knights came inside, making a fuss.

"Viscount, Viscount! Did you hear that? Lady Aria of the Roscent family, who was called the Imperial Star, killed the Count last night!"

The shocking news from the knight's mouth surprised him so much that he got up from his seat.

“... What? Last night? What are you talking about? You know that Roscent Aria was here last night!”

“Yes...? But... is the beautiful lady, who came here with His Highness the Crown Prince, Roscent Aria?”

“Yes! I did see it clearly with my own eyes—the name on the credit account! ”

The Viscount raised his voice who had seen the ridiculous book, which had been signed by Roscent Aria. When the Viscount contradicted, the knight expressed his question, cocking his head.

“If so... that’s weird. No one could travel that far after committing a crime in the capital, right?”

“Haven’t you heard anything wrong?”

“No, I received the document directly from the capital. Please look at this!”

The knight handed the document from the capital to the Viscount. The Viscount looked at it over and over again as if it was unbelievable.

“What’s this nonsense...”

It was an official document even stamped with a seal. When the Viscount no longer spoke and murmured to himself, the knight uttered a plausible hypothesis.

“Surely, she was falsely accused.”

“That’s probably what happened.”

"I don't know who it is, but it's absolutely stupid to make such a ridiculous claim. A lot of people saw Roscent Aria, who was with His Majesty the Crown Prince.

"Hmm.... there's a book she signed, so there are certain witnesses and proof."

There was a moment of silence in the office with the ridiculous official document between them. Soon after, the Viscount crumpled the document and put it in the trash can.

"The guards of the capital have gone as far as they can go. Who will take responsibility for this? Let's not pay attention to such useless things, and let's do our job."

"Yes, sir."

They then returned to their positions as if nothing had happened.

* * *

When they left the territory with the first trace, she was worried that he would use his ability, but fortunately, he did not. It was because a plausible carriage was waiting in front of the castle of the Viscount.

If the wagon was too fancy, then bandits might target it, so it was a carriage that didn't seem too uncomfortable. Aria, who had hoped for Asher to not use his power any longer, was about to sweep her chest away, and an unexpected face surprised her.

"Good morning. Your Highness Asterope, Lady Aria of Roscent. Would you like to leave for the next city?"

It was none other than Lane. He somehow looked tired when he greeted Aria and Asher. It was hard to recognize because of Lane's shaggy hair that seemed to be fake, but when she looked closely, she found that it was clearly Lane. Furthermore, Sorke, the Knight of Asher, was next to him.

They came out early in the morning... maybe they came running all night from the capital. She didn't know if Asher had the ability to carry a carriage, but from his complexion, it was clear that he had probably been running all night.

"... Mr. Asher."

It was only the two of them without a driver or a servant, so she called out his name and asked, "What on earth is this?"

As soon as he recognized Aria's gaze, he answered quietly, "To leave evidence that we are moving."

She didn't understand what he meant, but she couldn't show it, so she got on the wagon as he had prepared. Then she asked Asher again as soon as they left the place where the Viscount and the people of the estate said goodbye to themselves with a big bow.

"What do you mean to leave evidence? And a carriage without a servant..."

"This wagon is literally for evidence. It's for evidence to pick us up only when we leave and cross the border. That's why we don't have a servant. We don't have to."

'Oh my God. So we're moving somewhere in the middle? And using his power?' Last night he said he was fine, but Aria kept worrying because she knew he had to pay the price just as she did every time she had used the hourglass. So when Aria's expression became very dark, he added that he was okay.

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Chapter 169. Revenge (III), Part VI

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

“I should not have said I have to pay the price. I realized my limitations a long time ago, so I’ve never used my power to fall down ever since, so don’t worry too much.”

“But...” It was possible that with distance this far he might go beyond his limits without realizing it.

As the light of concern lingered on Aria’s face after he had explained it several times, Asher held her hand gently. “In addition, I am a descendant of the blood of the first emperor, who was called a half-god. I’ve seen the ancient texts that someone, who does not succeed the blood of the royal family that had been passed down through generations but who was taken from the outside will pay a serious price... However, I hope you’ll be relieved of your worry because I will not be harmed at all with this much.”

She could not refute it any longer when he said that he would be careful.

Come to think of it, he had used his power many times last night. Unlike herself, who once used her power and had to fall asleep all day, Asher was fine.

Of course, being worried was another matter. This was because she realized through this incident that their abilities were not omnipotent and that relying on it could lead to an unexpected mishap.

“... I understand. Instead, I hope you don’t overdo it.”

Understanding Aria’s worries, Asher gently kissed the back of her hand and promised to do so.

“I’ll take your words into consideration.”

Aria was relieved of her worries, and Asher held the hourglass’ box in her hand and said,

“But it’s okay today, so we’d better move on. The carriage is uncomfortable. When we get a comfortable carriage, let’s get on the wagon and move.”

She thought he would not let it go because he was stubborn, but she didn’t even feel like blaming him because he added an excuse.

“... I understand. I’ll pick up my stuff.”

So when she gave up and got the hourglass box back from him, he moved the space as if he had waited. The sudden change in vision was no longer surprising to Aria. As Aria toured a quiet vacant lot outside the village, he handed over a black cape to her that he had prepared.

“For now, wear this cape. You’ll have to buy some clothes first and change them.”

The clothes that she was wearing only attracted people's attention, and Aria wore the cape and hid her whole body without saying anything. She looked very suspicious. So she went into the clothing store. She bought a simple dress and changed to it right away.

"... I want to hide all your hair as I wish. I think it's better to cover your face, too..."

Asher furrowed his forehead upon the beauty of Aria, which he could not erase even though she had changed into a simple dress. He seemed to want to hide her beauty that was too much.

Aria smiled and asked him to relieve his worries. "Should I tie my hair?"

"No, I don't think that's going to solve it."

"Well, do you want me to wear a hat?"

"No. Even if you do so... we'd rather go to a deserted place."

"A deserted place?"

'Is there a place like that?'

As Aria asked back, wondering, Asher replied with a nod. "Yes, we'd better get an accommodation."

"... Yes?"

Surprised by the unexpected answer, Aria stepped back and sprained her ankle, and Asher hurried to wrap around her waist to support her.

‘Where? Lodging? A place where we can be alone? Is that really the sound that comes out of the mouth of a man who had his ears blushing whenever we meet?’

Aria asked if she had heard it wrong. “... Where?”

“Accommodation where we can be alone.”

“...”

‘Oh, my God.’ As Aria’s face turned pale from holding back her hiccups, only then did Asher realize the meaning of the “accommodation” that she might have misunderstood. He folded his eyes slightly.

“Well, I didn’t know you were such a bold woman. If you’ve told me earlier...”

“Oh, no!”

As if she had not had a pale face, she raised her voice with her red-hot face this time, and he laughed out loud because he found Aria’s actions very cute.

Unlike Aria’s needless worries and concerns, two accommodations were taken. As the sun went down, the carriage driven by Lane was supposed to arrive, and there was no need to take two lodges, but he did that, because Aria’s red face showed no sign of cooling down.

In addition, there was a mix of Asher’s pranks to make fun of her. Despite having two rooms, Asher and Aria did not stay in their rooms. They read books and reviewed the documents in a different place instead.

“We didn’t mean it, but we’ve got a vacation after a long time, so what do you want to do?”

As she was reading, facing the wind from the window, he asked. Aria was in agony because it was like a vacation where there was nothing else she could do, as he said.

‘Vacation...’

She had already had enough fun in the past, so she had never thought of taking a vacation or playing. Rather than having fun for nothing, she had enjoyed her busy days.

“Well... I’ve never really thought about it. It’s fun to do something rather than take a break. Doing nothing will only make me nervous.”

“Umm... I see.”

Aria’s answer gave him a slightly sympathetic nod. But he had a doubtful look on his face, so Aria, who covered the book, asked him back. There seemed to be something he wanted to do.

“What about Mr. Asher?”

“Do you mean me?”

“Yes. How would you like to spend your vacation? I can’t really think of anything to do.”

Then he answered as if he was expecting that Aria would say that. “In fact, I want to walk on the streets with you without anyone’s interference.”

“Streets?”

‘Do you really want to do something that trivial?’ Aria opened her eyes wide and asked back.

“Yes, isn’t it impossible in the capital city because you are so famous.”

“That’s true, but...”

It was ironic that Aria was more famous than the Crown Prince, but it was inevitable that he had not been as often seen outside as Aria. So Aria agreed and blurred the end of her speech.

“Then, cover the book and stand up.” As soon as what they wanted to do was decided, he reached out to Aria. As such, there was no reason to reject it because she wore a simple dress worn by the common people. It was only a walk.

“Ok, then let’s go out for a while.”

“Thank you, Lady Aria. And I’m sorry, but I’d like you to cover yourself with a hood.”

“Okay.” Aria smiled with a bright smile. Moreover, since it was what Asher wanted, she was willing to do it even if it was difficult.

* * *

Who was the one who had just been asked to go out for a walk? Aria, who came out of the lodge, began to glisten her eyes. Looking around constantly, it reminded him of a noble lady who first came out to the street. He was sure she would have been used to it if the days of when she was a commoner were longer.

“Oh, my God, Mr. Asher! Look at that!”

At the end of Aria's hand, there was a man who dazzled people with a plausible magic trick. There were probably more magicians that were more beautiful and mysterious than this one, and perhaps because of the joy of being on the street, she was very excited by the crude magic.

As Aria who was enjoying their walk more than anyone else, watched every street vendor and adorned the street, Asher smiled contentedly and held her hand gently.

"You look like a lost child."

Only then did Aria, realizing how excited she was, blushed and avoided his gaze.

"Oh, I'm sorry. I've never been out like this before."

"You mean before you went into the count's family?"

It was a question referring to when she was still a commoner. When there were no restrictions on going out.

Aria hesitated, unable to answer the question for a moment. She soon slowly opened her mouth. "At the time... We were too poor to go out. There were so many pretty and delicious things out there that I always wanted to buy. Besides, it was hard for a little girl to go to a crowded place alone. It was dangerous."

Prostitutes had been a disgrace not only to the nobility but also to the common people, so she had been often told harsh words by mischievous men. That had made her more reluctant to go out. He had seen Aria in an exhilarating mood in a long time. Since her face was starting to become somber again, Asher changed the topic.

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Chapter 170. Revenge (III), Part VII

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

“... I’m so glad I came out with you.”

“So am I.”

It was the cry of a child who fell on the ground and cried out that stopped her from looking around for such a long time. As a random voice filled the noisy street, Asher and Aria’s gaze also turned toward the sound.

“Argh! My money! My leg! Argh!”

At the direction of the child, rolling on the ground, was a man running away from the crowd like a loach. The man was very quick, even though he was big. He disappeared in a flash within the crowd, and the screaming child was still crying, unable to get up from the dirty ground. No, he tried to get up, but he couldn’t. One of the child’s slender little legs was twisted in a strange direction. The child seemed to have fallen wrong, pushed by the man’s strong power.

“Argh! My leg...!”

The child was injured by a pickpocket, but no one reached a helping hand because the child was so shabby. Aria’s beautiful forehead was naturally frowned upon by the overlapping images of herself from such a child.

“Are you all right?”

At that time, he reached out to help the child in haste, but all the child could do was roll on the ground, let alone hold his hand in the pain of his broken leg. While watching all this, Aria bit her lip and hesitated a little then took the hourglass out of the box.

‘If the child had lost only money, I would have finished this by giving the child some money...’

It was only a matter of time before a child in such a slum would die if he had a disability. She had seen such a child so many times and was able to decide because she had lost them. Anyways, today’s schedule was all about a walk, and most of all, he was around her. If he woke her up again, she could get up somehow.

‘So, please, it’s not too late.’ Aria turned the hourglass back. And time went back, except for herself.

“Lady Aria? When did you take out your hourglass? More than that, why...?”

As he was holding her hand, he suddenly pointed out the hourglass that Aria was holding, but she had no time to answer him. Looking straight back and grasping the child’s position, Aria found a dangerous man in a hurry approaching him.

‘That’s him...!’

She shook off Asher's hand and hurried to push the child back as hard as she could.

"Ouch!"

"... Lady Aria!"

The child, who was suddenly pushed out, rolled on the ground, and instead what remained there was Aria, who suddenly moved violently and gasped for breath.

'What the hell is she?' Because of the sudden turn of events, the eyes of the people were gathered to the fullest extent, and Asher hurried to Aria. The man surprised by her sudden action might have changed his target, but the man had long been gone.

"Are you all right?"

"Why do you ask her that? I'm the one who fell down!"

Compared to being pushed hard, he didn't seem to be hurt, and the child stood up on the ground and screamed. He had a nervous face.

Aria replied with a sigh of relief. "It's okay. I suddenly found a bug, and I was surprised, so... and I'm so sorry to you. This isn't an expensive thing, but it's an apology."

Aria took her bracelet off her wrist and handed it to the child. It was the cheapest bracelet she had, but the bracelet's value was enough for the child to live on for the next few years.

The child, who had received the unusual bracelet, opened his eyes and asked her several times if he really deserved it and quickly disappeared from the street. He seemed to be afraid that she would ask him to give it back.

"I'm sorry. I think I'll have to go back to the lodge."

It would have been better if she had caught the pickpocket, but the frail Aria had no power to do so. So Aria, who had given up catching him, put the hourglass back in the box. However, Asher's expression was strange.

"... Well, Mr. Asher?"

"... Lady Aria, the color of the ring...?"

'The color of the ring?' Aria lowered her gaze to her own hand in response to Asher's serious reaction.

"... Why did the ring's color change?"

The ring had no problem, so Aria cocked her head. Asher looked at Aria's ring for a while and then looked at her. He was dumbfounded.

"Mr. Asher?"

"I'm sure the color changed..."

He blurted his words and furrowed his forehead. He could not talk about it anymore because the color of the ring had returned to its original state as if it had not changed at all.

His ring's color also came back after a while, but its color took more time to come back. He knew that the remaining energy in the ring after using the ability changed its color, but there had been no such case as the energy disappeared so quickly like this at least as far as he knew.

Strange as it was, he rubbed his eyes again and identified the ring. However, the color of the ring still remained unchanged. He must have seen an illusion because he had used his power a lot for the past two days

"I must have seen an illusion."

"You must be tired as expected."

"No, not like that, but..."

Nevertheless, Aria's worried eyes caught him, so he nodded. Aria also had to go back to rest because she had used the hourglass. So the two soon turned to their quarters.

It was only a short time since they had come out, so they were able to get to the accommodation quickly. Aria checked the time. There was still plenty of time before sunset, but it wasn't enough to pay for the price after using the hourglass.

"I'll knock the door when the time comes."

Aria called Asher, who was about to return to his room, "I'm sorry, Mr. Asher, but could you please wake me up when the carriage arrives?"

"All right, I'll do that."

"If I don't get up... Please wake me up by hitting me."

"... Yeah?" When he was told to wake her up by beating her, Asher opened his eyes wide.

Realizing that it was a strange request for others to hear, Aria hurriedly added an excuse. "I tend to sleep deeply once I fall asleep, so it's not really easy to wake me up. Don't just call me outside. I was hoping you'll come inside and shake me to wake up."

However, the problem was that it was not a good excuse. Asher's eyes narrowed when he was told to come into her room alone and wake her up. It was the look she had seen yesterday. It was the look that was saying that he understood Aria's intentions, but he couldn't tell if it was real or not. So he confirmed the reason with his subtle tone.

"... Do you mean I can go inside while you are asleep? Without permission?"

"Yes, that's not that difficult for you who have sneaked into my room several times already."

It was Asher who was teased. Sometimes she got embarrassed, but basically, she had lived longer than Asher, and she was good at dealing with the opposite sex.

Sure enough, he answered Aria with the look of surrender. "All right. I'll wake you up and have a sound sleep."

* * *

After Aria fell asleep, Asher went over the documents he had not read before without a moment to reconsider her ring. Everything he had planned had been in the final stages, so he carefully examined it for careful consideration.

'Now soon...'

It would be possible to regain the imperial power that had been controlled under the hands of the nobility for a long time. It was a great opportunity to break up the Aristocratic Party and even the rest of the party.

Asher, who had checked the documents carefully until just before the sun was down to the west, had the final report in his hand. It was a new report from Lane in the morning. Because he had been with Aria, he hadn't heard the details, so he thought it was a work-related report, but after reading the first sentence, he realized that it wasn't.

'Why did he get it so quickly? It's been just a few days since I gave the order.'

He had to check several times to see if this was really the report he had ordered. It was because it had arrived earlier than he had expected. It was not long before Asher found out the report was correct and began to read it slowly.

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Chapter 171. Revenge (III), Part VIII

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

[His name is Chloe.

He was banished from the imperial family and has no family name, and he is thirty-seven years old. Known as the eldest son of Violet, who was the wife of Franz David, he grew up in the royal family but was later exiled from the empire with Violet, who was later found out that he was not David's biological son. That was seventeen years ago. His biological father is presumed to be a former lover of Violet, Marquis Piaast of the Kingdom of Croa, but it is impossible to confirm because they kept all the information secret. And the whereabouts of Violet and Chloe are unknown. I'm looking for a portrait. I'll let you know as soon as I get it.]

When he finished reading the report, he remembered a vague story.

'A long time ago, someone in the royal family fell in love with a foreign aristocratic woman at the first meeting, but it did not bear fruit because she had promised her life to someone. Although he had to give up, the royal man couldn't stop thinking about her and forced her to marry him.

Later, he lived happily with two children, but realized that one of them was an extramarital child of a woman's extramarital affair, he then kicked out his wife and son in anger and expelled them.'

'That was a true story. That's why the report arrived quickly.'

Although it was a while later, he seemed to have been involved in the case that had made a fuss in the imperial castle, so he seemed to be able to get information quickly. It was a shame that the garbage who had forced a woman to marry him even though she had already had her lover was part of the royal family. A sneer leaked through his tightly closed mouth.

A child made outside by a foreign aristocratic woman who had been married to a royal family! He grew up to a royal family, but in fact, he had nothing to do with the imperial family. Rather, he was born to his mother and father, who were nobles of the Kingdom of Croa.

Franz David.

That was the reason why he had died drunk all his life.

'What the hell does a man with such a complex background have to do with Lady Aria?'

Asher had heard that Frey, the eldest daughter of Franz David and Violet, had dressed Aria in the clothing of her brother, who had been deported with her mother. The portrait was still being sought, so he couldn't confirm it, but in dim memories of the past, he remembered that the face looked alike. He had thought it was simply because of the resemblance in the face, but was there a deeper story? The puzzle seemed to be in order, but it didn't work out, creating wrinkles in the middle of his forehead.

'I'd better keep it secret until it's more certain.'

It would only increase her anxiety if he would let her know the lack of information because he was not yet sure how it related to Aria.

'It's hard to believe that time has gone like this.'

Before he knew it, the sun was completely gone and it was getting dark outside the window. The carriage, which no one else was riding on, had lost weight, so it was more likely to have arrived earlier than scheduled because it was a little faster. He had to wake Aria up quickly and get on the waiting wagon and get through the gate formally.

"Lady Aria, it's time for us to leave."

"..."

"Lady Aria?"

"..."

So he called Aria's name several times outside the door, but there was no answer. As she had said during the day, once she really fell asleep, she couldn't seem to wake up.

"... You said it's okay to come in, so I'll really go in."

So he gave notice of what Aria had given her permission and opened the door carefully. Although he had ever sneaked in once, and he had been given permission, he went inside clearing his throat in vain. It was obvious that someone would misunderstand.

"... Lady Aria."

She seemed to have no sleeping habits, so Aria's face was somehow pale. It also looked sick. Come to think of it, she looked very strange today. She had suddenly pushed the child with an excuse of a bug.

'Is she okay? Should I call a doctor?' He began to worry that she might have been sick by a series of things. It wasn't too much to think like that. 'Even though she was not a biological sister, how could she remain intact when she was framed by her sister?'

"Lady Aria."

As he thought of it, he stroked Aria's hair carefully. It wasn't so messy, but somehow he wanted to do that. He felt at the end of his hand that he didn't want to wake her up.

It would be better to just put her to sleep like this. They had already made solid evidence and witnesses. Thinking so, he turned his head for a while, and he saw a box on the bedside table, which Aria had usually carried on.

'It's the box with an hourglass...'

It was a box containing an hourglass that she had said she felt comfortable to have. It was a little unusual for a woman to carry around in her arms.

As soon as he saw Aria asleep, he took the box carefully. It was a little heavy for a weak lady to carry around. Nevertheless, she had carried it with her, and she seemed to cherish it.

As he thought about it, he was curious about the contents, and opened the box and checked the hourglass; he looked at Aria again and took it in his hand.

By the way, he felt like he wasn't touching things, somehow.

‘... What is it?’

Still, it was like a strange sensation he had ever felt somewhere, a very strange sensation that could not be felt on an hourglass. The familiar yet unfamiliar sense made the heart of Asher beat fast, who had been beset with anxiety.

‘What the hell is this? Why is it felt in Aria’s hourglass?’ The gaze of Asher, who had touched it for a long time, soon went to the hand of Aria, who had fallen asleep. The ring on the ring finger had its own color as if nothing had happened.

‘The child of a woman who married a royal family and drank holy water; Aria resembling the child; an hourglass with a strange feeling; a man named Chloe, who was expelled from the empire seventeen years ago; the ring which seemed to have changed color... Besides, Aria will also turn seventeen years old after her birthday this year.’

... Even though it made no sense to think for himself, the hand with the hourglass began to tremble a little. Even though the puzzle was already on its way, he shook his head, saying, “It’s conjecture.”

Still, the strange sensation of the hourglass from his hand indicated that he was getting the right answer. But at the same time, he felt great anxiety. It was a sense of uneasiness that he should not hold the hourglass still. It was time to hurry back the hourglass.

“My hourglass...!”

Suddenly, Aria held Asher’s wrist, as soon as she opened her eyes wide. It was like asking why he had her hourglass. It was a very cold eye as if facing another.

As a result, he made an excuse with embarrassment. “... I thought it was going to fall off the table, so I was going to put it back.”

“Was it going to fall off the table?”

But the inquiring Aria’s speech was full of thorns. If it simply seemed to fall off the table, she wanted to ask why he was holding the hourglass himself, not the box.

No matter how embarrassed he was, he lied to Aria and felt like he was a criminal who had committed treason, and he quickly put the hourglass back in place, telling the truth.

“... No. Actually, I was wondering about this box that you carry all the time. I’m so sorry.”

‘I’m sure she’ll get angry. That’s her favorite hourglass.’

It was she who even woke up with a sense of déjà vu. After looking at him in a calm, unspoken stare for some time, she soon slowly closed her eyes and nodded her head, saying, “I see. I would have shown you if you had told me.”

In addition, the sharp expression on her face had disappeared. It was because she had great confidence in Asher.

“Is the carriage here?”

“Yes? Oh, yes. We have to go.”

“Then I’ll change my clothes and see you outside.”

“... Okay.”

Then he left Aria’s room and glanced back. There was a box of the hourglass within the reach of his gaze.

* * *

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THE VILLAINESS TURNS THE HOURGLASS NOVEL (HTTPS://READLIGHTNOVELS.NET/THE-VILLAINESS-TURNS-THE-HOURGLASS.HTML)

Chapter 172 (<https://readlightnovels.net/the-villainess-turns-the-hourglass/chapter-172.html>)

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Chapter 172. Revenge (III), Part IX

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

They were able to reach the Kingdom of Croa smoothly through several cities as planned by Asher. Fortunately, the speed of the official document was slower than their movement speed, so there was no difficulty in their moving. The carriage gradually slowed down when it arrived at the border and soon stopped.

“Mr. Asterope.”

Then they heard Lane’s voice right outside the carriage. It meant that they should come out. Although it was the Crown Prince’s carriage, it was not an official visit, so they had to go through a formal procedure unlike before. So he expressed his intention to go out soon and gave a look to Aria.

“We have to go out.”

They had been through a few cities, and they had sent a person to inform their visit in advance, so luckily they didn’t have to wait or prepare anything. It was enough to simply show his face and prove that it was the Crown Prince, and then sign.

“Somehow it’s noisy outside.”

So Aria, who was about to go out with Asher, cocked her head in the murmur of voices outside. Asher answered to Aria’s wonder,

“Maybe it’s because of our wagon.”

They must have wondered what a carriage was because it stopped in front of them without standing in line. ‘What kind of a great man is riding on it?’

If it had been stamped with the Imperial emblem, they would have bowed their heads, but the current carriage which Aria and Asher were riding was without a particular emblem, so people’s curiosity grew.

“Lady Aria, give me your hand.”

Aria slowly went out, holding the hand that Asher reached out after he had got off the carriage. Their eyes widened and swallowed their breath, who had been babbling at the mysterious carriage, as they saw Aria appearing from the carriage.

‘Who in the world is the woman with such beauty?’

She had always been an eye-catching woman because she was beautiful without decorating. Now, however, the more brilliantly decorated than usual, Aria’s figure was enough to catch everyone’s attention.

Countless crowds waiting to cross the border noticed the two, and there was a man rushing through them. He was seen as a high-ranking noble. He rushed out and greeted him, kneeling on the ground.

“Wel, welcome to the Kingdom of Croa. Your Highness Franz Asterope.”

And the crowd, who had been babbling again, hardened, as soon as the identity of Asher was known. ‘How dare they stood up in front of the Crown Prince!’ The crowd, who were watching, bent down to the point where their noses touched the ground.

“I don’t know what I’m going to do, as you welcome me like this.”

“It’s, it’s an honor. Please sign it and go straight through the door.”

On the document that he brought himself, he immediately wrote down his name, and this time it was Aria’s turn. As she was a woman who came with the Crown Prince, the man who still kept an extreme low attitude called her name and written in the document he had received in advance.

“Are you Lady Aria of the Roscent family?”

‘Lady Aria of the Roscent family?’

Aria’s name had been already widespread because there were so many people who had made their fortunes by their own efforts with the help of the empire. So the audience looked sideways unknowingly and checked her face again.

They had been told that the Investor A was a beautiful noble lady, but they were impressed by the fact that her beauty was so overwhelming that each could not express it. It was also the same for him who had come out to meet Asher and Aria, and he was bewildered by Aria, and he forgot his duty.

“Where do I sign?”

“... Yes, you can do it here!”

When Aria smiled and reawakened him to his duty, the man, who realized his rudeness, bowed down again and presented the document to Aria.

Aria, who did not blame him but gracefully filled out her name, returned the document. Then the man thanked her several times as if he had been greatly graced.

“I hope you’ll have a comfortable stay and go since I’ve got a lodge ready.”

The man bowed his head again. Thanks to the turmoil, the rumors of the Crown Prince of the empire and the star of the empire who visited quickly, spread throughout the Kingdom of Croa.

* * *

“... It won’t be possible to go out.”

It was a luxury accommodation only for the nobility, but it was noisy outside due to the crowd. Most of them were commoners who wanted to have Aria in their eyes even once.

People in the empire had a chance to meet Aria by attending the academy or visiting the county mansion in person, but those in the Kingdom of Croa did not. As Aria shook her head at the sight seen through the window, he put down the papers that he had been reading and laughed.

“It’s all because you are so great.”

“... If you say so, what to say...”

As she could not refute his words, she blurred her words, and Asher's smile grew thick.

"Since we have made evidence that you and I have left the capital for a long time, we will send the wagon first in the afternoon."

"What about us?"

"What about leaving tomorrow? I'm going to have to go out for a while because I have a business to do."

"Business?"

'A business in the Kingdom of Croa?' Aria nodded without asking further since she thought he would prepare something for the princess. And she really wanted to rest as she had moved in a carriage.

"There's a cook in the Kingdom of Croa who's pretty good at it. I remember the course dishes were pretty good. Why don't you come with me in the evening?"

"OK, I'll look forward to it."

At the same time Aria answered with a grin, Lane knocked on the door.

"Mr. Asher, we've got his location."

Asher, who looked at the box of the hourglass for a while, said, wearing a black cape. "It seems like the time has come. I'll be back in a few minutes, so please wait a minute."

Asher who left the words fled the room in a hurry. He seemed to be in a rush as if it was really important. Aria, who had nothing else to do after he left, took the book. She had been tired of reading it over and over again during the trip, but she couldn't help it because she didn't have an extra book.

While she spent her time flipping through the book, someone knocked on the door.

'Is he back already? This fast?' Aria, who thought it couldn't be done, did not answer and waited. Then the man who knocked on the door made a call. It wasn't Asher who knocked on the door, as expected.

"Asher, it's me."

Rather, he was looking for Asher. At the voice of a strange man, Aria shrugged her body on her guard. They would have set up security, but she didn't know how he got here through it. And somehow he was calling him by his nickname.

"Why don't you answer? It's me."

In a hurried voice, Aria picked up the box of the hourglass so that she could turn back the time at any given moment. Aria, who was ready, informed the visitor of the absence of Asher.

"It's been a long time since he left. So you'd better come back later."

"... Why? Isn't it first to meet me?"

In a very curious response, it occurred to her that he was the one who Asher said he had something to do with. There was a possibility that they had missed each other.

"Are you the one who made the appointment?"

"No, that's not it."

So she asked him, but the man answered firmly that he was not. At times like this, it was normal to lie. He was a very honest man.

"You'd better come back later, then."

"... How much I've cooperated... it's too bad."

Besides, he had a frustrated answer. The tone of his grumbling reduced her nervousness a bit. For a while, he muttered something as if to speak ill of Asher, and soon turned the subject around and asked an abrupt question,

"By the way, are you Roscent Aria of the rumor? A lady who the insensible Asher has been charmed to?"

It was a rude question, but she couldn't point out because she thought he was not an ordinary man as he knew who she was but talked down.

"... Then who are you?"

"I'll let you know if you show me your face. I heard you're a beautiful lady who anyone would love you at a glance, but I'm curious."

"No, I'm not so curious, and please go back."

"Haha. What an interesting young lady."

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Chapter 173. Revenge (III), Part X

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

It was not funny at all, but the man outside the door laughed loudly. It was a very strange man.

“All right, I’ll come back later, just like you said. I can’t get in the room as you are alone.”

Fortunately, the man who said so soon disappeared with a clear sound of footsteps.

Only then did Aria barely take a breath, close her eyes as she buried herself deep in the chair. Rather, she wanted to go back to the empire quickly.

* * *

After going out during the day, Asher returned to his quarters only after sunset. Things didn’t seem to have worked out well, seeing that he had a bad look. Returning, he ordered something with a pretty serious face to Lane, and then went out to dinner with Aria, trying hard not to show it.

“Does it fit your taste?”

“Yes. That’s what Mrs. Asher said.”

“It’s a stopover every time I come to the Kingdom of Croa.”

“I’ll have to, likewise.”

In the empty restaurant with no one, only the words of Asher and Aria sounded. As a matter of fact, she couldn’t afford to think of the taste, but Aria smiled softly without trying to show it.

She was a little bit disappointed to think that this would be the last time she had a leisurely dinner. Because she no longer had to stop by the city to rest, she was going to head straight to the capital after a few big cities. In addition, the carriage that had already departed was heading straight for the capital, taking only a brief break. Unlike when she had left the empire, she would arrive in the capital in no time. Therefore, there would be no more time for her to stay with Asher like this.

She felt it was the same with Asher, so he was doing his best for this moment, too. So Aria spent the evening focusing only on Asher, and somehow a disturber appeared in the whole rented restaurant.

“Asher.”

“... Lohan?”

“Why didn’t you come to see me first?”

Aria gazed at Asher with great embarrassment at the sudden appearance of a stranger. It was to ask for an answer, but as Asher was also embarrassed, there was no reply.

“Roscent Aria said that you would come back in the evening and I went to see you, but you were already out.”

It was only then that Aria recognized Lohan by mentioning her name. It was the man who had come to visit in the morning. He seemed to have an acquaintance with Asher, and he pulled out a chair and complained, and Asher’s face froze in an unexpected situation.

“If Roscent Aria had told you my story, I wouldn’t have bothered you like this...”

Lohan, who had been complaining, turned his gaze to Aria, which had been staying with Asher all the time.

“...” Then he stopped talking with a very familiar response. It was a familiar reaction of those bewildered by Aria’s appearance.

As soon as he realized this, Asher called his name hurriedly, “Lohan.”

“... I thought it would be just an excessive rumor, but it wasn’t. No, it was a rumor that would never reach a reality.”

He plainly looked Aria up and down. Aria, offended by him, furrowed her forehead.

“You didn’t ask me to tell Asher your story.”

“... Ah, yes. It’s my fault.”

“...”

"How clever of you! The fame of such a beautiful young lady crossed the empire and even made the Kingdom of Croa excited. God is so unfair."

So he got nervous, but it didn't work at all. On the contrary, it only added a very interesting look. It was Asher who blocked it.

"Stop it, before I throw you into the remote mountain."

It was pretty rough, unlike Asher. Because of the warning, Asher gave as much as he could, his eyes to dissect Aria one by one fell off. It seemed very regrettable that he took the wine glass of Asher smacking his lips.

"What's your business? Is it worth interrupting dinner?"

"No, I don't have it. I just stopped by because you came to Croa."

"It's a long way from the capital, and you're here to see my face?"

"Yes, I wondered what the purpose of coming to Croa in this busy time of year was."

Asher exhaled a deep breath as he questioned, pretending not to know. He seemed he was not very happy with the situation now. It was partly due to the interruption of his time with Aria, and so was Lohan's attention to Aria.

"You can ask that to Lane later, and go back."

"Can't you tell me now?"

"Yes. Get out of here quickly, for it's disturbing."

When he added a warning to drop him into the sea this time, Lohan finally got up, shrugging his shoulders

“All right. We’ve got plenty of chances to meet anyway. Inevitably.”

Lohan, who had said so, bowed his upper body to Aria, saying goodbye. Aria was going to bow her head...

“...!”

“Lohan!”

The man, who had snatched Aria’s hand before she knew it, kissed on the back of her hand and ran away. Then Aria, astonished by him, spilled the glass of water, and Asher, who had been trying to chase him, came up to Aria in embarrassment.

“Are you all right, Lady Aria?”

“... Ah, yes.”

Only one man appeared and disappeared, but she was out of her mind. Somehow, when she was in a bad mood, she wiped off the back of her hand, and Asher, who had furrowed his forehead, took Aria’s hand to stop it.

“And then you get hurt.”

When he said so, he checked Aria’s expression of displeasure and took his lips where Lohan had kissed.

It was nothing but a usual act, and strangely enough, the unpleasantness on the back of her hand had gone away a little.

“... So you’d better get back to rest. I’ll leave him in the mountains, so don’t worry.”

“... I see.”

And the feeling of discomfort was scattered at the face of Asher, who was very concerned about Aria.

“We’d better leave right after breakfast. It’s hard to get to the empire at once with my ability, so you have to ride a wagon in the middle.”

Aria nodded at the explanation of Asher. It was finally time to end the vacation and go to punish the wicked woman.

* * *

“... Uh, where did she disappear?”

After Aria and Asher had vanished like illusions, Mielle, who was left alone, blinked. She had been right in front of her a moment ago. No, where did the Crown Prince suddenly appear?

Feeling embarrassed and confused, she found a broken bracelet as she groped it around with her trembling hands. It was the bracelet Aria had been wearing.

‘I don’t think it’s a dream... Then where did she disappear?’

“What’s the matter, Miss?!”

Without a moment to think, those who heard Mielle's screams gathered, and they turned deadly pale and shouted at the terrible sight before their eyes.

"Yaaaaaaah!"

"Oh, oh my God!"

"... The Count!"

"Call a doctor quickly!"

Before they found Mielle, they found the Count first, and each of them screamed and announced this terrible situation. Then, Mielle got out of the mystery of the sudden disappearance of Asher and Aria, came to her senses, held the broken bracelet in her hand, and declared the cause of the disaster.

"... My sister! My sister did that! She suddenly pushed my father... and ran away!"

The audience reacted with mixed reactions to Mielle, who cried with a pale face.

"No way! Miss Aria...?"

"I knew it! She couldn't hide her true nature so easily! She's been fooling everyone all this time!"

"Where the hell did she run away? How dare her! We have to catch her now!"

Contrary to the servants and maids of the mansion who were embarrassed and hesitant, the guests raised their voices with bloodshot eyes, and Mielle shook her head, thanks to the reaction of the guests.

“... It happened so fast that I don’t know. Sob sob...”

However, there was distrust in the faces of the servants and maids, because she had repeatedly framed Aria.

Some of Mielle’s side also showed signs of uneasiness. However, they couldn’t take it out of their mouths, since they couldn’t say that everything was true when they had seen her in the meantime.

When she noticed this, Mielle began to create witnesses.

“Didn’t Lady Median and Lady Wendy see it? I thought your eyes seemed to have seen it.”

Her face looked very sad, but Mielle, whose eyes were horrendous, pointed to the two ladies. The two young ladies who were pointed out were from the low-class noble families. They were ladies from a powerless family who could not endure it without taking sides.

“... Yes?”

“...!”

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Chapter 174. Revenge (III), Part XI

Translator: Khan

Editor Group: Liber Reverie

How could they dare say no to the future Duchess's question? Although they had not clearly seen it, the two young ladies looked at each other, and soon nodded positively.

"Yes, yes... I, I saw it."

"I also saw it... even Lady Aria was running down the stairs."

"Oh, my God... How could she do such an immoral thing?"

Every young lady gathered, expressed their anger in her statement.

"I'm sure it's because my father didn't like my sister to meet His Highness."

In addition, with very convincing motivation, the audience was agitated once. Mielle hit a decisive wedge.

"Look at it! This bracelet! I tried to hold her, but she cut off and ran away!"

Indeed, the servants and maids who volunteered for her side to the unique bracelet that Aria had been wearing were also perplexed. Mielle, who set a perfect trap for Aria to get into a corner, lowered her head and smiled a little.

“... Mielle.”

Then Cain bit his lips as he watched it from a distance.

* * *

The Count, who had fallen down the stairs, was immediately taken to the room. They couldn't move him easily because they didn't know where he was hurt from falling down the stairs, but they couldn't let it go, so everyone paid attention.

In order to save him, his family doctor and other renowned doctors gathered at the county mansion. Fortunately, he didn't die, but he showed no signs of waking up, apparently with a severe head injury.

“... I'm sorry, but maybe he'll never wake up like this for the rest of his life...”

The Countess, who had been told by the family doctor, fell to the floor in a pale face. It was shocking that the Count who would protect her had come to this state, and it was her own daughter Aria who had caused a serious injury to him.

“Sob sob... father...”

“... Mielle, you'd better leave.”

Cain patted Mielle's shoulder, who was in tears, besides the Count. It was a little cold to say that she should leave the room now.

With Cain's help, Mielle moved with him to a guest room with no one. Cain, who closed the door and looked around, said, pointing to his forehead, releasing his hand to support Mielle.

"Mielle, this is a little... no matter how much I think about this..."

"What are you talking about now, brother?"

Immediately after Cain's words, Mielle, who erased the expression full of sorrow at once, poured out a sharp remark with a cold look. This shook Cain's eyes.

It was because he was shaken when he faced his father, who had just lost consciousness and fallen, even though he knew that he could not escape since he had already joined her plan.

Mielle grabbed hold of his hand so tightly, smiled benevolently, and began to persuade Cain,

"Brother, it's already happened. So you're going to take over the work of the Count and lock her up in the mansion so that no one can meet her. If we reiterate our intention not to punish her anyway, they won't be able to do anything in court."

"..."

"Are you going to let her marry the Crown Prince?"

"That's..."

'No.' Cain furrowed his forehead deep. Mielle, who made the crevice by touching the part he cared most about, baited him so that he could no longer escape.

“So you have to report it to the security forces as soon as possible before my sister ran away with the Crown Prince.”

“ ... ”

“You have to catch her quickly and then you can cut her sentence period in the prison. The later you are, the harder your influence will be. You know that, right?”

She had a point, so Cain finally called in the guards and accused Aria of trying to kill the Count. A search party was hastily formed on the charge of daring to kill the Count, and people were busy searching for her who had disappeared all night.

But they didn’t know where she had run away and searched the capital all night, but they couldn’t find a single hair of Aria, and the official documents were eventually sent to the cities near the capital about the following afternoon.

[I’m sure you’ll do well this time. Oscar also has a great expectation.]

Mielle, holding the letter from Isis in her hand, which had arrived during the night, hummed with joy. Everything must have been smooth in progress if the Count did not wake up. She would be the Duchess as scheduled and marry Oscar.

‘If my father won’t help me in the future, it would be better to not have one.’

It was Oscar, not the Count, who would share her future.

Her trust in the Count had been abandoned in the past when the prostitute had been brought in as a new wife. It was clear that this was a wise choice because it would severely punish him, eliminate the prostitute, and even her daughter.

“What about mother?”

“... She, she’s not coming out of her room.”

“Really? She should eat well.”

‘In a little while, she’ll have to get kicked out naked and wander the streets like before. And she should eat well now. By the way, why can’t we get her caught anyway?’

While the security forces were searching for her, Princess Isis said she had also released her people. Furthermore, she persuaded Cain to make his private soldiers search for her, but why couldn’t she get caught?

‘Don’t tell me it’s related to the missing Crown Prince?’

The Crown Prince, who had suddenly appeared and disappeared with Aria! She had doubted her eyes if she had misjudged it, but the broken bracelet had really explained that she had disappeared with the Crown Prince.

‘How the hell did he disappear? He disappeared in thin air, like smoke.’

Therefore, it was not possible for her to mention the Crown Prince. Who would believe it if the Crown Prince had suddenly appeared and taken Aria and disappeared? He would defend Aria later, but she had the broken bracelet and witnesses. She couldn’t get out of her trap anyway.

‘And the Crown Prince is destined to be sacrificed by the princess anyway.’

It was very strange, but she wouldn’t have to worry too much. It was only a few days later that Mielle heard of Aria.

“... Did she exit the capital? With the Crown Prince?”

“... That’s true.”

Mielle furrowed her forehead to the news that Cain had urgently brought from the outside.

She had thought Aria had run away, but she had never thought she had been out of the capital. She hadn’t thought she’d have gone that far after facing a situation that she was being pushed to a criminal, so all she had done was find her nearby. In addition, they said she was on her way back to the capital after stopping by every city to show her face as if she were on vacation with the Crown Prince.

“Isn’t she crazy?”

“Yes, she’s crazy.”

Cain, who responded so, looked angrier than Mielle. He looked as if he would twist Asher’s neck if he could. He had planned to keep Aria in custody, but it was more than enough to blow his heart as Aria had gone on a journey with Asher for a few days.

“I guess she’s thinking of going on a trip and saying she’s not the killer. To be foolish.”

‘We’ve got witnesses and evidence, but are you trying to get rid of the charges with such a simple trip?’ In addition, no matter how much she rushed out of the capital on horseback, she could not be cleared of the charges for travel unless she reversed time.

“So, are they bringing her tied up here?”

“No, she denied all the charges and said she’d go to court on her own. So I heard she’s coming to the capital with security guards, not tied up.”

“What a frivolous, stupid bitch...”

Mielle thought Aria might be a little clever as it was rumored. As expected, she could not be wise because he was a child from a prostitute.

“I’ll ask them to hold a trial as soon as she comes back, so make sure you check what you’ve prepared. Without a mistake.” Cain, who was told that she was not alone but with Asher, seemed not to forgive Aria, either.

Mielle smiled gently at his rather tough words.

“Yes. My preparation is already perfect, so don’t worry, brother.”

Then a few days later, Aria, proudly entering the capital, returned to the mansion surrounded by guards. The guards tried to read her face, unable to forcibly arrest her since she was with the Crown Prince.

Mielle, who had been waiting since Aria’s carriage had come near the capital, hurried to Aria, who was getting off the wagon, with tears.

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Editor Group: Liber Reverie

“How did you do that...? You couldn’t do that to your father!”

She was so good at acting that Aria, who tried to swallow her laugh that was about to burst out, stepped back a few steps with a frightened face.

“It wasn’t a lie...? Did my father...?”

There was no shadow of a criminal when she asked back as if she were checking the facts. Rather, it seemed like things were unbelievable to her.

“I thought... I thought you were just joking with the purpose of getting me back quickly... so I came back in a hurry and was afraid of being scolded...”

Aria’s shoulders were trembling. Asher wrapped her slim shoulders.

“That’s weird. She can never be a criminal.”

The frightened Aria burrowed into the arms of Asher as he took her side. Just a moment ago, Aria said she wouldn’t let Mielle go. Some might swear at Aria’s two faces, but it wasn’t him. He really liked the way she even created public opinion to achieve what she wanted. Besides, she burrowed into his arms, so he couldn’t hate it.

“... Whatever Your Highness says, there are evidence and witnesses. I don't want to believe it, but... I saw it with my own eyes.”

Aria shuddered at the news that she had witnesses despite her performance. When Asher, who thought it was because she was afraid, lowered his gaze and identified Aria, instead of fear, he could see the tip of her mouth rising.

‘Mielle is lying.’

They had already produced irrefutable evidence even if there were witnesses. However, she had a false witness. Countless people seemed to believe her remarks.

‘You're stuck in a self-made trap with all your might.’

There was no way to rescue her, and Asher said as if he could not help it.

“Then, you'd better tell the truth in court.”

“... I can't help it if you want to. Poor father... When did you say the trial will take place?”

Mielle, who looked very sad, asked Cain, who had been staring at him all the time.

‘Both of you, a brother and a sister, had been waiting for your stepsister to come after digging a trap in pairs. Oh, poor Aria!’

As Asher, who was smiling bitterly, patted Aria's back and swept her hair away, Cain, whose face turned red from anger, clenched his teeth and replied,

“... The criminal has appeared, so we'd better proceed right now.”

The time has come to punish those who truly committed the crime.

As Cain said, the trial was held immediately.

It was because Aria had been accused and Mielle had witnesses. Nevertheless, she had to sit in the seat of a sinner because she had been on the run for a long time, but she was able to stand in the seat of the defendant, unlike Emma.

It was because she attended the trial herself. She denied outright that she was a sinner, and she also claimed to have a witness. Of course, her close ties to the Crown Prince was the biggest factor in consideration.

"Aria..." The Countess, sitting on the left side of Aria, called her name in a trembling voice.

Aria looked at her mother. 'How painful it must have been for her daughter to be a murderer.'

Aria held her mother's cold hands and pleaded for her innocence. "Mother, I'm not guilty, so don't worry."

"... Really? Do you mind if I trust you?"

"Sure. What would I get by pushing him down the stairs? Except for standing in court like this... Besides, there's plenty of evidence to prove that I'm not a sinner, so don't worry. Rather, the one who's going to be punished..."

Aria didn't finish what she was saying and looked at the other side of the room.

There was a man next to Mielle, who she had never seen before. Perhaps he was Mielle's lawyer, and next to him was Cain. They didn't expect the outcome of the trial and seemed to think they would win. Their proud, arrogant faces had no signs of retreating.

"Lady Aria is not guilty. I assure you that."

"I'm relieved to hear you say that..."

The Countess's face was a handful lessened by the addition of Asher, who sat on the right side of Aria. When the Crown Prince said that he would guarantee it, her worry vanished. 'Isn't he in a position to take away the sins that exist?'

Soon after, people began to enter the courtroom. It was known throughout the capital just before the trial that Aria had appeared near the capital and was crowded with people watching the current situation. And there, Aria could even meet an unexpected figure.

"... My God. Lady Aria, you didn't do that, right? It wasn't you who did that? Are you okay? You lost a lot of weight!"

Before the trial began, Sarah appeared in tears as if she had rushed after hearing the news. She looked so bad that she seemed unable to sleep at ease since Aria was wanted as a criminal. The Marquis of Vincent, who appeared holding Sarah's hand, also seemed to not believe the rumors about Aria.

Aria nodded and denied the sin. "It's okay, Sarah. I'm not really the sinner, so don't worry. I'll prove my innocence."

"Yes, I believe you, Lady Aria."

"I wish you luck, too."

In addition, Baron Burboom, Annie, Jessie, Aria's followers, and ladies who stood up for Mielle were on the seats, and Isis was also seated behind Mielle. Apparently, she was expecting the end of Aria.

Isis stared at Aria, who sat next to the Crown Prince, as if to kill her, and soon patted Mielle on the shoulder and offered her consolation. Perhaps she was praising her accomplishment that she had been good at dealing with the daughter of a dirty prostitute.

'They're so stupid. How could you boast of a crude relationship made up of petty tricks, even if you don't know what face you're going to leave this courtroom with later?' As if to encourage her, Asher took Aria's hand. At the same time, a judge appeared, and soon, the trial began.

"Start the trial."

The judge was none other than Frey. She seemed to be assigned this time because she was mainly in charge of the court of the nobility. Though it was a trial that she would not lose anyway, she was wondering whether her presence would benefit or not, and the tension was a little bit removed from the look of Asher, who confirmed Frey's appearance.

"Defendant Roscent Aria, you were accused of pushing the Count of Roscent down the stairs. Is that true?"

Like Emma's, Frey asked Aria's sin right away.

Aria shook her head and denied her guilt. "No, I didn't push him. I wasn't there in the first place."

"... I see."

At Aria's answer, Frey nodded faintly. It looked different from Emma's trial where she had responded coldly all the time. In addition, there was something unclear about her expression.

"... Roscent Mielle claims that Roscent Aria pushed the Count down the stairs and ran away. Is that true?"

"Yes! I saw it happened clearly, and two other people saw it. Running away down the stairs! Right? Lady Median and Lady Wendy?"

"...Yes? Yes...!"

"Well, yes. I saw it clearly..."

On Mielle's question, Median and Wendy were wary of her and said yes. The witness seemed to feel a little guilty of perjury as it was the most important incident. Besides, they would be afraid. If there was any evidence of Aria's innocence, the next time they would have to look up the judge from the center, not from the witness stand.

The juries were agitated once when three, not one, claimed yes. In response, Frey put in her eyes on the charges she had received in advance and Mielle's statements. The hands of the Countess, who held hands with Aria, became colder in an unfavorable situation.

"... Okay. Because there are enough witnesses, I'm sure it's Roscent Aria's crime. Do you have any other rebuttal?"

This time it was Aria's turn. Aria stood up proudly and pleaded not guilty. "Of course I'm not guilty."

The wrinkles in Frey's forehead quickly disappeared at Aria's words. She nodded as if to speak quickly.

"In the first place, I wasn't at the mansion at that time. I was out of the capital with His Highness the Crown Prince."

"... That's a hard argument to prove."

"No, God gave me the chance to prove that he felt sorry for me."

Mielle raised her voice and said, "Don't lie to us. You make a ridiculous claim. That can't be. I saw it with these eyes! How shameless can you be after pushing your father down the stairs!?"

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Editor Group: Liber Reverie

For a woman who had pushed her real father, she was shameless, and Aria laughed at it. ‘Yeah, so you had been using dirty tricks in the past, putting poison in my teacup.’

“... Someone who was shameless pushed my father. It’s not me, but she is the real culprit.”

“Stop lying!”

“Mielle, even now, reveal the true culprit and withdraw your perjury.”

“The real culprit is you, sister!”

“Stop. Stop it. This is the court.”

The two were ready to fight right away, so Frey spoke out and intervened. If Aria proved that she was not the real culprit, she did not have to fight hard because Mielle’s perjury would be confirmed.

“There’s evidence that I wasn’t in the mansion at that time.”

“... It’s a lie! Apparently, everyone saw you!”

When Aria said there was evidence that she was not in the Mansion, Mielle stared at the ladies behind her one by one and forced them to answer.

“Yes, right? You’ve seen her, haven’t you?” Mielle forced them to answer.

“... Yes, I saw her.”

“That’s right. I ran into her when she got back to the mansion.”

“I even talked to her.”

This time, the testimony came out without difficulty because they had seen her. They were genuine faces.

Aria smiled and said yes. “Yes, it’s true that I visited the mansion. By the way, did anyone see me after I went into the mansion?”

“...!”

“...”

“There was none, right? It was because I left the mansion right away.”

Although they were on Mielle’s side, there was no lady to help her by breaking the law or perjury. Moreover, most people seemed not to expect Aria’s rebuttal, as they believed Mielle’s argument.

“But it’s weird.”

Aria's voice rang out in the court which had been cold in an instant, questioning what seemed to be really strange.

"Why don't the two say anything, who said that they had seen me running away down the stairs?"

They testified that they had seen Aria push the Count down the stairs and run away, and it meant that they had seen Aria since she had entered the mansion. Still, why didn't they say anything? Why couldn't they relate Aria's question to what they had seen?

"Well, that's...!"

"... Oh, come to think of it, I saw you! We saw you... Yes..."

Aria kindly made them recognize what to answer, and at their awkward answers, all the audience in the court questioned their testimony. As Aria continued to refute it step by step, Frey asked her again about the facts,

"I'll ask you again. Has anyone seen you leave the mansion?"

"No, unfortunately not. But no one ever saw me stay in the mansion except for Mielle, Median, and Wendy, who said they've seen me. Oh, and..."

There were two more. There were two lambs staring at her with very anxious eyes. Aria referred to them.

"My maids, Jessie and Annie, also saw me."

"That, that's right. My lady ordered me to clean up, and I finished cleaning and left the room."

"I only saw her for a moment... I was not able to see her after I left the room because she said she was going to read."

After all, there was no one who had seen Aria. As the atmosphere gradually flowed in the wrong direction for Mielle, her agent rose from his seat.

"I am the representative of Lady Roscent Mielle. I'll speak for her, considering she's still in shock."

"Do that."

When Frey's permission fell, he immediately explained that Aria's argument had a loophole.

"Lady Aria keeps insisting she wasn't in the mansion, but there's no way to prove that. And three ladies are saying that they saw Lady Aria push the Count down the stairs."

"It certainly is."

"So it is Lady Mielle's testimony that is credible. Unfortunately, Lady Aria doesn't have anything to refute or any witnesses."

Everyone seemed to agree with him. The assertion of Mielle, who had certain witnesses, was accepted more.

"No, I'll be a witness on that matter."

But when the agent spoke that far, Asher, who had been watching it quietly, opened his mouth.

"As everyone already knows, she left the capital with me, and we just got back today."

The representative was wary of him, who was refuting the clause one by one. This was because the Crown Prince was the one who had to refute it. Nevertheless, he cleared his throat for his job and rebutted with his eyes at a strange place.

"... It'll be possible after the crime."

"There is evidence to prove that Lady Aria was not in the mansion at that time."

"Are, are you talking about evidence...?"

"Yes, evidence. We just returned after making a payment that was put on credit. I even have the receipt. God must have intended to help Lady Aria who was afflicted by injustice."

Asher took a paper out of his arms. At Frey's instruction, the document was handed over to the judge.

"It's... a bill of credit?"

"Yes, I sneaked out of the capital with her and arrived in the next city, but I was too busy to prepare some money. That's why I got credit and paid it back on my way back."

'The Crown Prince bought something on credit?' The audience was in a state of confusion at the absurd evidence, and Mielle had a face that wanted to shout that it was a lie.

"Your Honor, I want you to pay attention to the date and time."

At Asher's words, Frey checked the date and time on the bill.

“... It’s eleven o’clock in the afternoon on the day of the incident.”

“Yes. If Lady Aria ran away after pushing the Count, it was impossible to move to the next city at that time. It’s a half-day ride to get there.”

Frey’s expression became brighter in the appearance of irrefutable evidence. The representative, who realized that if this were true, the seat of Mielle and Aria would be reversed, countered with a pale face.

“Your, Your Honor. Such evidence can be produced at will!”

“There are a number of witnesses, so I hope you check them out.”

“Ok, I’ll send someone over to check right away.”

Frey handed something down to the servant, who was waiting for her, and the servant, who checked it, left the court right away. In the quiet courtroom, Aria’s clear voice rang.

“Your Honor, I’ve got permits to and from the cities, and can I submit them in case?”

“... Of course. It’s also easy to calculate the time, so that’s a big piece of evidence.”

Frey’s face, confirming the permits, was quite serious. Still, the public opinion leaned toward Aria not being the real culprit although Frey was not asking for more evidence.

“Okay. Is this the end of both sides’ arguments? I’d like to adjourn for a moment to see if the evidence submitted by the Crown Prince is true.”

If the facts were confirmed, then the seats would be reversed this time. No, Mielle should go to Emma's place of the seat, not Aria's. She would be punished as much as Emma, who was executed and disappeared.

"Miss..."

The agent called for Mielle in a hurry. Sitting behind her, Isis had a pale face, trembling as if she wanted to run out of the courtroom at any moment. Cain was also nervous and clenched his fists to the point where his fingernails pierced through his palms' flesh

Mielle was also agitated, but she soon recalled that Aria had been in the place where she herself had pushed the Count and gradually regained her composure.

There must be false evidence. It might have been just a way to drag time. It would all be nothing more than a hoax that would frighten her. At the moment the Count had fallen down the stairs, indeed Aria had been in the mansion.

Mielle, who was gradually regaining her reason, soon realized that she had another card—the conclusive evidence that Aria had been in the mansion.

"... No! There's one more!"

She got up from her seat and held something in her hand. Aria, who measured it by opening her eyes thin, had a smile of satisfaction.

"There's one more thing? What's that?"

Frey asked back with a cold face. Already, she seemed to think Aria wasn't the real culprit. The trial was not over yet, but it was due to the fact that the Crown Prince and Lady Aria had submitted certain evidence that could not be refuted by any evidence brought in.

“It’s my sister’s bracelet!”

Mielle took the broken bracelet out of her arms. As Frey’s eyes continued on what it did, Mielle hastened to add an explanation.

“It’s the bracelet my sister used to wear. She pushed my father down the stairs and dropped it on the way out in a hurry! I picked it up on the spot.”

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Editor Group: Liber Reverie

Her bracelet was a unique design that didn't suit the aristocratic ladies, so other ladies soon recognized it.

"Oh, come to think of it, I saw the bracelet, too! I talked about the bracelet when Lady Aria went into the mansion. It was a strange shape, so it was noticeable."

"I was there, too! She said it was a bracelet from the Crown Prince. I saw her wearing it."

They were the young ladies who had been sarcastic about Aria's bracelet when she had arrived at the mansion.

'Why is the bracelet in Mielle's hand if it was in Aria's wrist until she entered the mansion? She said she went out right away, but when did she drop it? Moreover, didn't she know how she dropped the precious bracelet given by the Crown Prince? Did something happen for her to have to leave the mansion in a hurry?'

Everyone waited for her answer because the more they thought about it, the more likely it was that Aria would be at a disadvantage.

"Lady Aria, did you lose the bracelet I had given you?" asked Asher with a face of regret.

‘Who would dare to regard him as the Crown Prince, who performed as plausible as Aria did?’

Aria replied with a face that she didn’t know what was going on.

“It can’t be! Mielle... I don’t know what you’re talking about... That’s not my bracelet.”

“This type of bracelet can’t be common, but it’s not your bracelet? A lot of people have seen it. I’m sure you dropped it in the hallway! You didn’t even go straight out! It’s no use lying!” Because this time it was true, not false, Mielle raised her voice.

So Aria raised her arm with a look that seemed quite unfair.

“What are you talking about, Mielle? The bracelet His Highness gave me is on my wrist like this...!”

Then Aria’s slender wrist, which was raised to the fullest, was fastened with a bracelet like the bracelet in Mielle’s hand. It was another bracelet from Asher.

‘How come that bracelet is back on Aria’s wrist...?’ Mielle’s eyes grew big as if what she was seeing was unbelievable.

“I don’t know where you got that bracelet, but I never took it off my body for a second.”

At Aria’s lying, Asher helped her, saying a word side-by-side.

“... You did that as expected. Even if she wants Lady Aria to be the real culprit, how dare she present the bracelet as evidence? The bracelet was specially made for you, so there is only one in the world. I’m curious about the origin of the bracelet that Lady Mielle has.”

Mielle's face froze because of his tone as if she had made a fake to make Aria into a criminal.

'It's really that shallow woman's bracelet!'

It was clear that the bracelet was dropped before she had run away with the Crown Prince that suddenly appeared. So Mielle wanted to pursue her claim, but Frey was also on the side of Aria, so sadly, Mielle's claim was denounced as false.

"I see. About the bracelet Lady Mielle claims... it seems that Lady Aria did not lose it and kept it, but... okay... now. I will check the two bracelets and make a fair judgment based on your claim."

Frey's words to judge fairly was very cold. Mielle's strength drained out from her legs, and she collapsed onto her seat. Finally, Isis, who had seen her disgraceful behavior, rose up from her seat and left the courtroom. Cain also gritted his teeth as he saw his sister who talked nonsense.

The audience remained silent at Mielle, who had tried to condemn Aria with false evidence. In the meantime, Mielle began to doubt rationally, shaking his eyelashes.

'Don't tell me she had two...!'

She thought maybe there was another bracelet. If they were lovers, they might usually have shared the ornaments together.

'No, it's a unique shape of bracelet, but it doesn't look very expensive, and the quality doesn't look good, so they could say that it has been specially made, for words only, and it might have been bought again because it's sold in bulk somewhere outside of the country!'

Miele, whose heart was in a hurry, dared to tell the Crown Prince if he was lying. It was impossible for a sane person to do that, but Mielle was currently out of her mind.

“Your, Your Highness, didn’t you give my sister a new bracelet...? Or didn’t you give my sister the extra bracelet you had...?”

“... You are such an impertinent woman!”

‘No matter how hostile they are, how can she make remarks questioning the Crown Prince in his face?’

Asher, who furrowed his forehead, replied that she was unpleasant, and the ladies, who found out that Mielle had gone too far, looked carefully at him. They began to regret little by little, saying that it was wrong to defend her with just a word of Mielle even though it was already late.

“Are you saying that I fabricated evidence to save my lover? Without any evidence? Even if I really gave Aria another bracelet, how would you confirm that? Can you take responsibility for what you say?”

“Well, that’s...!”

This time, Mielle was speechless with the mockery of Asher. It was a sneer as if she had done it. She thought it was easy because she had the witnesses and enough evidence, but what the hell was going on with this? She thought this was perfect!

It was apparently because of the irrefutable evidence that Aria was in the mansion at the time she pushed the Count down the stairs had been given. In fact, even though Aria didn’t push him, she was in the mansion when the Count really fell.

Tears seemed to come out of the injustice. All those who had believed her words had turned their backs, and she felt like she was being choked as they avoided her eyes.

“My sister really pushed my father...! You’ve all seen... my sister who pushed my father at the edge of the stairs as hard as she could...!”

Everyone had already doubted if Mielle was lying, but she insisted repeatedly that Aria had pushed the Count. Her voice was half-locked, and her lips were trembling, but she didn’t give up in condemning Aria.

However, it was a futile argument that was no longer worth hearing. So when no one was listening anymore, Mielle’s face turned white like a sheet of white paper, and it looked as if she would soon fall. On the contrary, only sympathy for Aria had risen.

‘Why... why does everyone see me like that?’

Mielle’s voice grew blurred with resentment. Indeed, Aria and Mielle seemed to have reversed each other. It was a moment that Aria, who had returned to the past, hoped for so much.

“Mielle... Why should I push my father down the stairs? I don’t think I’ll get anything from doing that...”

Aria said while squeezing tears to drive a wedge in, and the Countess that was sitting next to her began to sob a little. Unlike Aria, which was made out of falsehood, it was a genuine tear. It was also the tears of a fragile woman who had been suffering alone.

The audience watched Asher comforting the poor mother and daughter, and Mielle, who consistently made claims that were only considered false, the stigma of being a wicked woman had moved away from Aria to a new person, and the sentence was almost

obvious.

“Is this it?”

Frey asked, writing something down on the document. No, it was a questioning tone, but it was more of an affirmative. Now it was an affirmation that it really wasn't worth hearing about her argument.

Mielle swallowed her breath when she felt the piercing gazes at her.


She wouldn't let things end like this. It was the end of severe punishment and the stigma of being a wicked woman! This ending was only right for Aria, the real wicked woman—a lowly, dirty bitch!

‘Someone, somebody, please, help me!’

When Mielle looked at her brother that was sitting next to her and asked him for help, he realized that he had no chance to save her, so he had his eyes on the floor.

After the Count had fallen into a coma and gained the power of the acting count, he thought that his sister would be punished rather than Aria, who had stolen his heart.

The agent was only wiping the sweat out of his forehead because he had no plea for her, who was constantly babbling. Maybe he was regretting taking on this job. So it seemed as if he would no longer be on Mielle's side. In addition, the young ladies, who had used to make all kinds of sweet talks for her, turned away from Mielle. The witnesses, Median and Wendy, also avoided her eyes.

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Editor Group: Liber Reverie

“That... that...!”

Mielle shook her hands and stuttered. Her clear green eyes were filled with tears. Her lips quivered to make excuses, and the seat where Isis had left was full of chill. Her departure meant that Oscar could also leave her.

‘I don’t even have a father to protect me anymore, so what do I do...!’

The eye of Mielle, who was on the verge of losing everything, was on the other side of Aria and Asher. Her forehead, which was stained with cold sweat, heated up at the sight of a mother and a daughter, who were relying on Asher. It was all because of the Crown Prince, who had suddenly appeared and disappeared with Aria.

‘The Crown Prince who had suddenly appeared like a vision and disappeared with Aria.’

She didn’t want to mention that because she couldn’t bring the Crown Prince into the affair, but she was currently not in a position to hide it anymore. So even though she knew that it was not smart to mention the Crown Prince, her mouth began to mention him by itself.

“Well, come to think of it, I saw the Crown Prince in the mansion...!”

“... Me?”

“Your Highness... Your Highness disappeared with my sister, who fell on the floor! You showed up all of a sudden! Like a vision!”

“Ha... You’ll really just say anything, don’t you?”

As he laughed in vain like he was bewildered, Mielle sought consent from the young ladies who had become witnesses.

“I-is that, right? “Lady Median and Lady Wendy?”

It was bizarre that she burst into tears as she walked on an irreversible path.

“... Yes?”

There was no way to say yes. There was no one in the world that could get back onboard a ship that had already sunk. ‘And he appeared like a vision? What a strange world this is!’ So they shook their heads, and Mielle screamed and burst into tears. It had been a long time since her body collapsed under the chair.

No one supported her. Mielle’s condition was very strange, and they were afraid that they might be wrongly linked and severely punished by the Crown Prince.

“Why, why... why don’t you believe me? I saw her. I really saw her... Please someone...!”

Asher, who clicked his tongue at the cry ringing in the court, asked Frey for her psychic feelings.

“... Psychic feelings?”

"I think she's pretty crazy. She can't talk like that without it. Look at her condition now."

"... It's certainly strange."

Frey who was positive, and Aria, who blushed with tears this time, said, "... I think you'll need to check the psychological feelings of the young ladies who were in the mansion. Apparently, I wasn't there, but they kept saying that they were watching me. Ah! Come to think of it..."

The audience's curiosity poured on Aria, who opened her eyes wide as if she had thought of something.

"Maybe it was a different party than a tea party. Otherwise, they can't have a strange memory as a group... I heard that apparently, they stayed in the mansion until late at night, but it's strange that the underage ladies had been partying so late..."

While staring at Aria, who continued to talk carefully, Asher mentioned the word 'hallucinogen'. Hallucinogen was not difficult to obtain because it was consumed in secret among some nobles.

Of course, the punishment was strict because it made the mind and body impoverished, but it was not easy to catch them, and there was no attempt to catch them because the imperial family had low authority.

But now... The situation was different since he regained the authority of the royal family with Aria on his back. The mere punishment of little girls was enough with a few instructions, just like now.

"When the trial is over, I'll have to ask them to investigate first."

Even before the end of his speech, many of the young ladies, who pretended to not know anything, expressed surprise by swallowing their breath or dropping their fans. Some of them even voiced their opinions, saying, "That's not true at all."

"Your Highness! I'm not really! If anyone drank a hallucinogen, they'd be Lady Median and Lady Wendy, who saw Lady Aria!"

"That's right! I have nothing to do with it! I've only seen Lady Aria entering the mansion! It's true, isn't it?"

Median and Wendy, who were accused of taking hallucinogens, also began making desperate excuses.

"Now that I think about it, I don't think I've seen Lady Aria!"

"Well, me too! I just saw someone's hair. She's blond...! I think that's why I've mistaken her for Aria! If you were not in the mansion, it must have been someone else! "

"Are you saying that you made a mistake because you saw someone with blonde hair?"

"... Yes, yes! I seemed to make a mistake! "

Wendy replied, nodding hard, as he asked back.

"The other one with blonde hair, who was there... There was only one. Was she really blonde? "

Wendy realized who she had sold to avoid the situation, and with her palm on her mouth, she swallowed her breath. The cry of Mielle who controlled the court stopped clearly. The corner of the mouth of Aria, who was watching everything, went up a little. The situation

turned out better than she had thought.

“Do you mean someone with blonde hair pushed my father...?”

Aria asked back with a surprised face. Her red-glowing eyes looked very sad for some reason. It seemed that she was grieving about the situation and her father.

“Yes...? That, that’s...!”

Wendy, who was pointed for her hasty mouth, hesitated to answer. If she had said she had just misjudged, it would have been okay, but she was questioned as she had mentioned she saw someone who was blonde.

“Lady Wendy...?”

“Please tell me what you know.”

“That’s...”

She hesitated for a long time, but soon she could not help it, nodding her head faintly, and everyone’s eyes turned to Mielle.

“... That can’t be, right? Why are you looking at me?”

Mielle, who stopped crying, countered with a grimace. It was a face they had never seen before from her. Nobody did mention her, but they were driving Mielle to a real criminal.

The number of blonde aristocrats was quite high, but at the time the Count had fallen down the stairs, the golden-haired lady on the third floor was only Mielle. Mielle strongly denied it, but she raised her voice toward the eyes that did not fall off.

“Don’t be ridiculous! I’m sure you saw her!”

“Mielle...”

Cain, who knew that the real culprit was Mielle, silently closed his eyes and lowered his gaze. All the circumstantial evidence pointed to his sister as the culprit, so he couldn’t open his mouth otherwise.

In addition, if he said something wrong, he would be accused of a claim like Mielle’s. He could not open his mouth as it appeared that the Crown Prince decided to put Mielle in a corner.

“Did you see the face?”

When Frey asked, Wendy, who glanced at Mielle, shook her head calmly. Even if she didn’t say that far, they were able to guess who the real criminal was. However, that didn’t mean the crime would go away.

“I see. That means you framed Lady Aria that had blond hair and a faint shadow. The first testimony you gave said you saw clearly who was going down the stairs.”

“... That’s...”

Perjury was being charged heavily. Many people were imprisoned for making false statements even though they knew. This was because testimony made the greatest contribution to a trial.

Even in light cases, the charge was heavy, but they did the false statements in an attempted murder case that could ruin a person’s entire life. Although the correction was later done, it was obvious that their intentions were highly malicious, so it was clear that

they could not avoid a great punishment.

It would be considered if they had done perjury by circumstances beyond their control. However, Median, who was beside Wendy, was trembling and terrified. She suddenly rose from her seat and shouted, "The truth is...! I didn't say that because I wanted to!"

Median was quite frightened when she said so. At this, Mielle's face cooled down. Mielle looked like she would not let her go if she said one more word.

When Frey looked at her and asked, "What does that mean?" Median was frightened. She glanced at Mielle. She hesitated and then continued to speak, "It's... it's what Lady Mielle told me to say, so I'm forced to...!"

"What are you talking about?"

Mielle, who sprang up to her seat, shouted, "Don't talk nonsense."

Median crouched and trembled. Wendy was beside her and was also terrified. She began to burst into tears.

Aria was astonished that the two could actually betray Mielle. She covered her mouth with her palm, and the Countess's eyes rolled back as if she was going to faint.

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THE VILLAINESS TURNS THE HOURGLASS NOVEL (HTTPS://READLIGHTNOVELS.NET/THE-VILLAINESS-TURNS-THE-HOURGLASS.HTML)

Chapter 179 (<https://readlightnovels.net/the-villainess-turns-the-hourglass/chapter-179.html>)

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Editor Group: Liber Reverie

‘How did the kind Mielle did such a terrible thing?! Is there anything else in the world that is so absurd?’

No, it was clear that there would be nothing. She had set up a trap and attracted accomplices, but the trap was a sharp blade toward her and, to make matters worse, even her accomplices betrayed her. Moreover, the trap to finish the wicked woman made herself a wicked woman.

It was hard for Aria to hide the laughter that burst out because it was so ugly as Mielle revealed her true nature and got very desperate.

“When did I ask you to say that? I asked if you saw it, and you said that you saw it! All other ladies saw it, right?”

It was not a lie but a truth, so some ladies nodded reflexively. Then, they lowered their heads in astonishment, fearing that they would soon be forced to serve as an accomplice.

It’s funny to have this kind of thought, but... Mielle is also a very poor woman.

She would have thought of herself as the finest and most elegant aristocratic lady in the empire. As Aria watched them now, it was too hard to think that they had friendly laughed and chatted.

‘What was her personal network that Mielle had built, and as an elegant lady of the county family with such great wealth, and as the next Duchess?’

Aria turned her head, thinking it was such a funny life. At the end of her gaze was Sarah. Caught in the arms of the Marquis of Vincent, she had a look as astounding as this disastrous situation.

‘Will she stand by me until the end if I do something like that?’

As she thought so, she suddenly got an eye contact with Sarah, who was looking at this way. Her worried eyes were filled with affection for Aria.

‘Is that so?’ That was why it occurred to her that Sarah would never betray herself, and she would be at her side in any evil deed. It must have been the greatest treasure after she had been returned to the past and succeeded with Asher.

“Lady Median! How can you lie like that!? If you hadn’t seen it in the first place, you should have said that!”

“That’s...! You pointed at me so much and asked...!”

“Is that your excuse? Your Honor, I’m really under a false accusation! I have never given such instructions to both of them, and they have testified that they saw my sister! And... she was really on the scene!”

Mielle shouted as she became desperate. She seemed to be mad by the shock.

In court which was a terrible mess, Frey, who had been furrowing her forehead, pressed her temple several times and ordered her to be quiet soon.

“... It’s a mess, I can’t think of as a noble’s trial. My head hurts.”

Everyone agreed. Who would regard them as elegant and noble ladies? They were appalled and disappointed as they saw the dirty, mud fight.

“I understand your arguments. First of all, the surest thing is that Lady Aria wasn’t in the mansion at that time. She’s submitted evidence like this,” said Frey, holding in her hand the evidence submitted.

“And another one. Although Lady Median and Lady Wendy couldn’t recall what they saw on their own, they drove Lady Aria to the criminal, and finally changed your testimony. In fact, I wonder if you’ve actually witnessed it.”

Median and Wendy shivered. Then they set their eyes to the floor as if they were ashamed.

“Finally, I would like to point out that Lady Mielle witnessed the Count of Roscent fall from the stairs and has known who the real culprit is. What do you need to fight? It’s very simple to sort out.”

With that arrangement, it seemed to be clear who the culprit was. It was the only one who had witnessed the Count fall down the stairs. Perhaps it was the same in Miele who realized that and she squeezed her voice at Frey with a great deal of malice,

“The culprit is really... my sister.”

“All right, I’m going to review the evidence submitted by Lady Aria and make a ruling. If the evidence is true... and the real culprit will also be revealed.”

Frey, who said so, got up from her seat. Her eyes staring at Mielle were as cold as the ruling had already been judged.

“Oh, and I’ll make the ruling again at this time tomorrow. I’m sorry, but I’ll put guards on you and other ladies until then. Please excuse me because I cannot be sure of the real culprit and therefore have to do it.”

Frey, who said so, looked back before leaving the courtroom and at the end of her gaze was Aria, holding the Countess’s hand tightly in her hand and consoling her.

“Mielle!?” And Mielle who had been crying and screaming all the way through the trial soon lost consciousness and fell to the floor. Cain hurriedly supported her, and they soon heard a voice calling for a doctor.

But unlike Emma’s last case, people turned away from his doctor-seeking voice, and in the end, Mielle was moved to the carriage by the servants of the county family. Five guards followed behind Cain and Mielle. Rather than worrying about Mielle, the guards showed their determination not to miss her whereabouts.

“Aria!”

“... Sarah.”

After the trial, Sarah, who ran to Aria, hugged her and burst into tears. Even though she was mature outside, Sarah felt that Aria would be hurt by the shock she had received.

Aria buried her head on such a shoulder and hugged her waist, like the day she had first met, just like a pure child. Sarah cried for a long time as if the bank that had blocked her emotions had collapsed. It had always been so when she was with Sarah, but it was unfamiliar to Aria.

In the past, Aria had just laughed at these things. She had never imagined someone would think so much of herself. Not even her mother hadn't done it. So she had thought it was all about being drunk with entertainment and leading those who had praised her beauty.

But not now. Aria felt calm and strange when she had others who loved her more than themselves. As much as they thought and worried about Aria, Aria had come to think about them, too.

"Don't worry, Sarah. I'm fine and innocent."

"Everyone in the world knows that Lady Aria is innocent. So I hope the truth will come to light soon and get rid of the false charge."

Sarah, who had been consoling Aria for a long time, soon returned home with worrying. Aria, who had five guards, was sent back to the mansion after being escorted away by Asher.

"My God, Miss. Look at how much you lost your weight!"

"Would you like to take a bath first? You must be tired of a long trip, but you can't even rest..."

The servants and maids of the mansion, who she thought they would start doubting the case, treated Aria with great intensity. There were, of course, those who thought Aria might be the culprit, but even those people were worried about her because of her movements so far.

'If I'm in a crisis or framed, it's normal to lose people around me. What's going on?' Even if she was in a very plausible trap, there were a lot of people who were worried about her. They were at best possessed by crude gifts and pretentious words.

Aria, who felt strange in one side of her heart, released her emotions frankly and said,

“... Thank you all.”

“Miss...”

She checked the condition of the Count, leaving behind the crying servants by the impression. He was asleep with a face so emaciated that he really didn't seem to wake up.


How pleasant it would be if he woke up miraculously and reminded that the one who had pushed himself was Mielle. Wouldn't he be crazy? It was something that might ruin the county's family. So she took his hand, hoping that the Count would wake up, but unfortunately, there was no movement.

‘So why did you pour your affection on Mielle? To such a foolish child who can't reciprocate?’

Besides, he had just tried to take advantage of herself. If he had changed his attitude at all, she would have turned the hourglass around even if she could be left alone in the woods, even if she could not measure the time. She was sure she had been worried about the Count falling down the stairs.

However, the current Aria didn't think of that at all. This was all the Count's own gain. He was guilty of driving a humble but innocent child to the brink of the cliff, and raising Mielle so that she knew only herself and pushed her father down the stairs.

* * *

 Report chapter

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THE VILLAINESS TURNS THE HOURGLASS NOVEL (HTTPS://READLIGHTNOVELS.NET/THE-VILLAINESS-TURNS-THE-HOURGLASS.HTML)

Chapter 180 (<https://readlightnovels.net/the-villainess-turns-the-hourglass/chapter-180.html>)

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Editor Group: Liber Reverie

Mielle, who had fallen and been transported, did not return to the mansion. Maybe she took a rest in the hospital. She might not have the courage to return to the mansion where Aria was.

Moreover, because Cain did not return, Aria was able to rest in the mansion and go to court the next day after reassuring the Countess, riding in the unexpected carriage of Asher.

“... Mr. Asher? How did you come here...?” Aria, facing Asher, who was savoring tea in the garden with great ease, could not keep her word to the end in embarrassment.

Asher answered her question with a gentle smile, “I’m here to meet you.”

The maid next to her was trembling in a pale face.

‘Oh, my God. Is it OK for the Crown Prince to show his face to such a trifle? You’re even drinking tea without saying anything.’

Aria had no idea that he had arrived until she left the house after preparing if he had told the servants and maids not to tell what he had arrived.

“How do you do your job?”

“There’s nothing urgent.”

Asher rose as he shook his seat. Then he reached out to Aria.

The leisurely figure gave Aria a small laugh. She was not seen as someone who had been framed and went to court to get a verdict. So the servants and maids, who had been worrying about Aria with open eyes all night, could feel a little relieved when they saw her smiling.

“Shall we go?”

At the urging of Asher, Aria held his hand. Then, she headed to the court in a very large, colorful carriage with the seal of the imperial family which seemed to have been deliberately prepared. Perhaps the Crown Prince was around her, so the guards followed her from a little distance.

She could see people with their eyes wide open and their heads bent toward the carriage at every passing street. Without having to explain, it was clear that they would look at where the wagon was headed and assumed that it was the Crown Prince’s carriage carrying Aria.

‘Don’t tell me you’re going to show off on purpose...?’

It was the same when he had visited the mansion of the county family last time, but it was a man who tried to show off in a really strange place. Then Aria narrowed her eyes and stared at him, and he asked again, “Why? Is there anything wrong?”

“No, it’s just...”

She did that because everything was cute; his neat face, his hand that held her hand, and his curious eyes. Besides, he was trying to show off his relationship with her, none other than shown.

Her heart tickled for nothing because he looked just like a man of his age. When Aria had been that age, she had never felt it. Aria touched her heart because of the feeling that she could only feel back in time.

“Lady Aria...? Are you sick?”

When he asked her with a worried look, Aria smiled a little and nodded her head.

“I think so. Sometimes when I chat with you, I’ve felt my heart is strange.”

Her heart is strange...! What is that...? Asher was about to turn the wagon, startled, but he could understand what Aria meant.

“...!”

Asher opened his eyes wide and covered his mouth with his palm. As she looked at the redness of his earlobes. Nevertheless, his gaze was still facing to Aria’s eyes. Aria also faced Asher’s gaze.

They were different from the men who had been always drunk with alcohol and drugs. But the slight shaking eyes seemed to represent the heart of Asher.

He looked at Aria so still without a word for a long time, but breathed a deep sigh and shook his head. It was like he was liberated.

“... You always embarrass me unexpectedly.”

“I didn’t mean to make fun of you.”

This was not to say that she had not expected such a reaction. She had expected that he would be embarrassed with his ears flushed, as usual. Whenever she saw him, she felt Asher took care of her and that her heart was full.

Moreover, he did not know she was so calculating and snobbish, but she wanted to see Asher, who paid attention to every word and responded to them, and his eyes that only looked at one person.

“... That’s why it’s so troublesome every time.”

Not knowing what she had in mind, he washed his dry face and spoke his mind. It was as if he could not do something insidious yet to the young Aria. However, it was Aria that was really insidious.

“I don’t know why you’re having a hard time. Did I do something wrong?”

He stared at Aria’s clear eyes, as she answered, but he held his fists, avoiding her eyes, and started acting strangely. While she watched him with a deep gulp of laughter, the carriage reached the court.

There were a lot of people in front of them who couldn’t even enter the courtroom if they had heard the rumor. Some of them were familiar faces. They were the businessmen and their wives who had been invested by Aria.

Whereas in the past, there had been only those who had wanted to curse her and her death, there were so many people now who were worried about her wherever she went. She thought it was like a dream.

“Lady Aria...!”

“Thank you for coming here, if you’re busy.”

Aria, who answered and told them not to worry, entered the courtroom under the escort of Asher.

“... I’m surprised that she has arrived in advance.”

Cain and Mielle were inside already. The young ladies, who had filled her back, were all gone, and they sat alone in desolation. Of course, her expression was propped up by evil. The perjury ladies were far away.

“I’m sure the guards urged her. They couldn’t have done that to you, because I visited you myself.”

“Ah...”

Cain, who put Mielle in a feeble state on his shoulder, frowned at Aria coming in with the Crown Prince. Mielle also gave a look of exhilaration. ‘How dare the Crown Prince be you?’

Asher also paused in a bad mood after finding them. Aria leaned her head on his shoulder, sticking to the side of Asher, making Cain feel uncomfortable, as Cain’s behavior was foolish. And Asher trembled his body, surprised.

Nevertheless, he didn’t avoid their eyes but gritted his teeth. He was the eldest son of Count Roscent, as expected. His sister might soon be severely punished, but he was only interested in a woman. ‘Isn’t it just like his father?’

Perhaps his interest in taking over the county family on behalf of the fallen Count was no longer Mielle. His purpose from the beginning was to dominate the county family and wield it at will. Rather, he might think about how to pressure Aria and punish her in the future.

‘Or maybe he’d prepared something else to save his sister.’

Even after remaining in the seat, she looked friendly with Asher by touching the back of his hand without fear, fixing his collar, and removing dust from his hair. Eventually, before Cain turned his eyes, Asher seized Aria’s hand.

“... Stop.”

Aria sat up when she realized that his condition was serious at the voice of Asher.

‘Oh, my God, what am I doing now?’

As soon as she realized that her opponent was Asher, her face was about to burst with embarrassment. Frey came into the courtroom in good timing as she rolled her eyes over how to deal with it.

Aria missed the timing of her apology and was wary. Asher, who responded to Aria, briefly clicked his tongue and sighed. He seemed to think Aria was a very innocent woman, so it was an act of innocence that came out of it.

In the meantime, Frey, who saw the two in a strange mood, smiled a moment, then broke through the silence and opened her mouth. “I think you’re tired because there have been two consecutive trials. That’s why I’d better make a decision right away.”

She pulled out some papers, stretched them out and looked at them in detail, then stared back at the front.

“First of all, Roscent Aria, who was accused by the family of Count Roscent... I hereby pronounce that she is innocent.”

It was a natural result, but she was a little relieved.

This was all thanks to Asher. ‘What would have happened if it hadn’t been for him?’ As soon as she had forgotten the shame and looked at him, he had a subtle smile, gazing at Aria.

Frey spoke without having time to share the joy, “After checking the evidence, I found that the documents submitted by Lady Aria were all true and that she could not commit the crime because there were many witnesses who had seen her and the Crown Prince. So, Mielle, Median, and Wendy are automatically convicted of perjury.”

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THE VILLAINESS TURNS THE HOURGLASS NOVEL (HTTPS://READLIGHTNOVELS.NET/THE-VILLAINESS-TURNS-THE-HOURGLASS.HTML)

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Editor Group: Liber Reverie

Someone burst into tears as soon as Frey finished speaking. It was Median. She burst into tears as if she could not believe that she had become a criminal.

“Your Honor! Is that really true? She might even buy a witness!”

Mielle’s voice, pretending to be sick, filled the courtroom. It was she herself who had recruited the witness.

“We’ve done the research so strictly that anyone can be convinced of it. If you want to check, you can make a request later. That’s all the court’s punishment is, but the three of you will have to undergo a separate investigation into the hallucinogen test later.”

It was only then that Wendy, who realized how ridiculous the case she had been involved in, began to cry. It was only now that she realized how unjust it was to take the false charge. Only after being dismissed did she know that it was punishment... ‘What a foolish woman she is.’

“If it’s a punishment for hallucinogens...?”

“I’m going to tell them.”

As if he had waited for Aria's question, Asher replied with a smile. They must have never dreamed that the job, which had been deliberately left to the Crown Prince by the Aristocratic Party due to the difficulty of tracing and investigating, would seize their ankles. It would not end easily if Asher would deal with it.

"Finally, the charges against Roscent Mielle."

And the sentence that she had waited for began. Mielle stared at Frey with a very nervous face. Her pale look was so serious that she could collapse immediately.

"For you, I heard that you were there alone when the Count fell down the stairs, and a witness saw the golden-haired lady there."

Frey's eyes were sharpened after a short pause. So Mielle swallowed her breath, and Aria took the hand of Asher. She hoped Mielle would be punished severely.

"I've confirmed that you're a real criminal who tried to kill Count Roscent and sentence you to twenty years in prison."

"Twenty years in prison?" It was heavy for the punishment inflicted on the aristocratic lady. So Mielle, who was trembling so badly as Frey's words fell, jumped out of her seat. Then she tried to rush straight at Frey, but the attempt was stopped by guards waiting around.

"No! It's not me! That's what she did. Don't be ridiculous!"

More than a dozen guards surrounded Mielle's perimeter and blocked her from moving anywhere, whether Frey had ordered in advance before sentencing.

"Your Honor! I have something to tell you. The county family retreats this accusation...!"

Cain, who had been bewildered by the more severe ruling than expected, came out late, but Frey shook her head.

“The execution of the sentence starts today. If you have any objections, I hope you’ll do it later, and this is the end of the trial.”

There was no mercy behind it when she turned coldly.

The news of Mielle’s murder of her father quickly spread throughout the empire.

* * *

“Are you really going to go back to the mansion?”

“Yes, it’s my home now.”

Aria nodded to Asher’s worried question. Although Mielle was punished, he seemed worried because Cain was still in the mansion. It was because Cain had chased after Mielle who had been dragged out and had stared at Aria and Asher several times. The look was as full of murderous spirit as Mielle.

Asher did not release Aria’s hand and persuaded her again, “Why don’t you go to my villa? There’s another one in the capital city as well as one in the woods. If that’s inconvenient for you, I’ll find a place for you.”

It wasn’t that his worries didn’t make sense. She had already been framed by Mielle, so she didn’t know what danger would befall on her. It might be a good choice to leave the mansion, as Asher said.

“... No. My mother is still in the mansion, and I’m sure the employees in the mansion are worried.”

Aria smiled bitterly and made an excuse that the Countess remained in the mansion. He could not answer though he tried to say something.

‘I’m sorry to bother you, but the truth is that I didn’t finish Mielle perfectly yet, so I need to stick to the mansion. That way, I can get her information faster, and how to punish her.’

Twenty years in prison. It was a severe punishment for the noble lady, who was underage. It was clear that the sentence was set on the premise of an appeal. In addition, at the end of the trial, Cain had said he would cancel the charges. So no matter what he would do, he must do anything to get Mielle out. It wasn’t that difficult for the nobles. And another problem was that it was not so easy for a minor, aristocratic youngster to leave home without reason.

Maybe he reminded himself of a lot of problems, but he said in a very sad tone, “I hope you will become an adult soon.”

It was not like other good things would happen when she grew up. Though she had realized much from the past experience, she could see what he wanted from the warmth that held her hands together. He seemed to want to be with Aria as soon as possible.

“Then I will be able to protect you, by keeping you beside me. I can boast of being my own person.”

“Isn’t that what you’re doing now?”

Today he had been stirring the capital with a splendid carriage. Asher laughed a little at her.

"It's hard to deny. But I hope there will be a place where I can officially be with you... so you don't have to act weird."

Aria, who recalled her touch in front of everyone today, lost her speech with her eyes wide open. A little shame came in.

'Why do you bring up those words again and embarrass me?' If she had been questioned by someone other than Asher, she would have been able to deal with it flexibly. However, she couldn't do that because her opponent was Asher, as usual... So Aria said curtly, "... I won't do it again."

"No, you can do it, but I hope you do that when there's no one."

"I won't."

"Please."

"No, I won't even talk anymore."

"I'm sorry. It's okay when there's a person, so do as you like."

Eventually, Aria, relieved by his tender smile and apology, smiled after him. It was also a smile that melted away the joy of having achieved what she had long hoped for.

* * *

"You cannot cancel it because the trial has already been terminated."

"... Then I'll appeal. I'll give you bail, so please release Mielle."

Cain, who had never expected such a big punishment, replied with embarrassment.

‘How dare the court refuses so harshly?’ If it were the Count who had the broad personal network, it would have been easier to deal with things, but this time the Count was a victim, and Cain was just a naive nobleman who has just graduated from the academy.

Of course, it could be solved easily, but Frey was standing in the way. Besides, the Crown Prince’s breath was in it.

Cain gritted his teeth and asked for an interview, “Mielle has never been in a place like this before, so I think I should check it out. She’s still young.”

“I see. You’ll have to fill out the paperwork, so you can come with me.”

Cain was not able to meet Mielle until he had completed a fairly complicated document.

It was a humble place compared to the mansion, but it was a prison for the nobility, so there was no strange thing to find fault except that it was a little narrow.

“Brother...!”

“Mielle.”

Cain came close to Mielle, who greeted him with tears. His eyes were swollen as if to cry all the time after the trial. So Cain hurriedly handed over the handkerchief to Mielle.

“Well, what am I supposed to do now...?”

“I’ll get you out, so don’t worry.”

Sob sob... In Cain's answer to get her out, Mielle began to cry aloud. As he saw that she couldn't give a proper answer and just squeeze out tears, she seemed to be in a very unstable state of mind.

The guard glanced inside as he had heard that she might have taken a hallucinogen.

Mielle, who had found some stability in Cain's comfort, began to curse Aria again, "My life is... because of that vulgar woman...! I'm scared of what everyone will think of me in the future...! Sob sob... how did I keep the image? What would Oscar think? What am I going to do if the engagement is broken?"

Mielle cursed Aria, listing each of the things she had lost. It was a way of saying that all these things had come from Aria. She passed all the blame on to Aria.

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THE VILLAINESS TURNS THE HOURGLASS NOVEL (HTTPS://READLIGHTNOVELS.NET/THE-VILLAINESS-TURNS-THE-HOURGLASS.HTML)

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Editor Group: Liber Reverie

“In addition, she was definitely in the mansion! But how did she get to the next city? You’ve seen her, too!”

“... Yes, I saw her.”

As usual, he had arrived at the mansion and checked Aria’s room. Apparently, the lights had been on in Aria’s room, and he remembered seeing her silhouette as well. He also believed she hadn’t really sneaked out because he’d always been watching her.

So he had trusted Mielle’s words that she had been with Aria at the moment the Count had fallen. Because Mielle had been on the same side, he had believed that she couldn’t lie. If Aria hadn’t really been in the mansion and Mielle had been doing a one-man show alone, she would not have asked for help purely from him. She had been doing that all the time.

‘So I didn’t have the slightest doubt about what Mielle said, and I didn’t take any action...’

He hadn’t doubted that Mielle would do well on her own.

She had always been praised for her shrewdness. Although he had not spent much time with her as he had entered the academy, Mielle had always been a child who had been praised by someone.

Of course, he had just watched with folded arms, because the Crown Prince had stepped forward. It had been possible that if he had made a rash move, he would have taken the false charge. He had also expected that the Crown Prince and Aria would make some evidence because they said they had been to a faraway country.

When he saw Mielle's face, he thought it was a good thing to stand by with folded arms. In the first place, all he had wanted to gain from this was the real power of the mansion

Cain had intended to save Aria who would be in a corner as a criminal and to give a favorable impression, but it was only supplementary, and not for the original purpose. Mielle had a glimmer of hope as he said that he had seen her, and asked with her sparkling eyes,

"... Why, why don't you tell the judge you've seen her now?"

"Mielle. As I told you, it's dangerous to testify that you and I saw her, at the same time. The judge will be asking why we were all there in front of Aria's room in the first place."

"You can say it was a family meeting!"

"Why was the family meeting in front of Aria's room? Besides, it's weird to say that we had a family meeting we'd never had before. It'll also be complicated to explain why our stepmother wasn't there."

When he repeated the answer to Mielle, who was trying to persuade him again, she burst into tears again.

"I'll examine the evidence again. I'll apply for an appeal and bail, so don't worry, just wait a minute."

"... I get it, brother. And I have one more favor to ask of you. I hope Miss Isis will come to see me... I have something to tell her."

"I see. I'll deliver it."

Cain, who left the prison, looked straight at the evidence submitted by Aria. In addition to the court-appointed nobility, two guards followed him. Unfortunately, however, there was no weird thing in it.

If they had produced evidence from only one place, he could do something, but they would have submitted certificates of passage through several cities and finally from the Kingdom of Croa. A certificate of passage from another country... They couldn't even try to fake it.

Moreover, it was marked as a time when one would not arrive unless one moved very tightly. There would be enough time if the Crown Prince moved alone, but there was no extra time to move with Aria who wasn't used to long-distance travel.

'I can't argue...'

With this perfect evidence, there was no manipulation. No, it was a thoroughly planned evidence that could not be refuted. They said it was a vacation, but they didn't spend so much time in the city. Cain, who had been checking them for a long time, covered the files that had sorted out the evidence.

"Have you finished it? If you have any questions, would you like me to explain?"

“... No, thank you. I'll apply for an appeal and bail first.”

“I see. It'll take a while because it has to go through the judge. Come with me.”

The application was filled out and bailed out according to the instructions, but the only answer returned from Frey was no. The answer returned within a day as if there was no room for review.

[Her age is still young, but she did the heavy crime and there is the risk of a second offense, and I reject your application for bail. I'll reschedule and inform you about the appeal at a later date.]

Cain, who read it, crumpled the document and threw it to the floor. ‘I can't believe the judge rejected the bail! It is the nobility of the empire to free a man on bail, even if he kills a person!’ It was clear that the Crown Prince had done something.

To make matters worse, even Isis expressed her intention not to meet Mielle. The day to go to the Kingdom of Croa was a short time away, and she said she was busy, but she no longer seemed to want to continue her relationship with Mielle and the family of Count Roscent.

‘If my father was fine...!’

If his father had been fine, he would have persuaded the Duke to bring Mielle out somehow. However, the Count was in a coma by the hands of Mielle, and other nobles, who had thought it was a disgraceful crime, turned completely away from their eyes.

It was disgraceful of him to realize that the great power his father had, only after he had driven his father to hell. Even though he had obtained the power, he had failed to use it properly.

‘Aria always ignores me!’

Somehow the servants and maids of the mansion took care of Aria, like a glass that was fragile. She had acted as if she had been the power of the county family.

It was too late, but Aria, not Mielle, should have been the culprit. But he could no longer put the false accusation on her as she had completely prepared and refuted.

On the contrary, she earned the name “Poor Lady” and gained the sympathy and love of all people as if she was revered. Though of humble origin, there was even a great deal of public opinion that her character and wisdom were perfect for the Crown Prince’s spouse. Even among the Aristocratic Party, no one dared to refute it. Unable to tell Mielle about it, he was seething angrily in bed, when a woman’s screams were heard in the Count’s room.

“Call the family doctor! Call the family doctor! Hurry!”

It was the Countess. She was screaming with a very surprised face. If she was making a fuss like that, the Count was either dead or awake.

‘Don’t tell me...?! I haven’t achieved anything yet!’

With the fear of assisting and inciting the immoral thing and the thought of having to pay for it, he could not stop his whole body to tremble. Nevertheless, he had to confirm what had happened in the Count’s room, so he fearfully opened the door.

“...!”

Cain opened his eyes wide. He had heard that there was a greater chance that his father would not wake up, but the Count, who seemed unable to regain consciousness throughout his life, was staring at the door with his eyes wide open.

Cain's whole body trembled as if he were going to rush in and tear it apart for his immoral crime. But the Count didn't say anything but just stared silently at Cain.

Cain, who had been terrified of the Count for so long, approached him slowly, without any movement. Cain called the Count in a trembling voice, "... Father."

"..."

However, the Count still had no answer. There was no movement, either, except just staring at Cain with all his strength, even though it looked very unnatural.


'Maybe...?' As if he realized something, Cain asked, "Can't you speak?"

Blink. The Count closed his eyes once and then opened to Cain's question. It seemed to be a sign of affirmation. When asked, "Can't you move your body?" this time, the Count closed his eyes once again and opened. Unfortunately, keeping his eyes open seemed to be the limit. Cain swallowed a sigh of relief at the sight.

"... Well, I'm glad you woke up like this. Are you sick anywhere?"

Even when asked awkwardly, the Count blinked once and sent a sign that he was okay. Fortunately, he didn't seem to have any regrets about Cain. Because he just woke up after a very long time and opened his eyes, he seemed to feel uncomfortable.

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Editor Group: Liber Reverie

Cain asked the Count carefully.

“... Do you remember what happened? Do you remember the accident...?”

When he carefully mentioned the accident, the Count, whose eyes were shaking for a moment, slowly closed his eyes and then opened it again. Cain swallowed his saliva. ‘I wish he wouldn’t remember. How can he remember this incident?’

“Do you remember the criminal...?”

The Count’s eyes blinked once.

“... Was it Aria?”

Unlike earlier, the Count blinked twice. That meant...

“Then, it was Mielle, as expected...?”

The Count, who did not answer Cain’s question for a moment, closed his eyes. It seemed like a memory he didn’t even want to remember. Fortunately, he did not seem to know he was an accomplice to Mielle, seeing that he didn’t show hostility or showed no signs of

surprise.

The Count had closed his eyes, but just in case, Cain covered his mouth, which went up by itself, in his belief that God must be helping them.

‘I’m so lucky, and if he can’t talk like that and he can’t move his body, he’s just a scarecrow.’

His father couldn’t do anything with that body, so he would automatically be the Count. It was much better to be a scarecrow who woke up like this and couldn’t do anything at all than to be so anxious about when the Count would wake up.

“... Please lie down for a moment. The family doctor will be here soon.”

The frivolous Countess screamed, so one of the servants went to look for him.

“Would you like some water?”

“...”

The Count blinked and Cain was about to go out of the room to get some water, but a servant was already standing by the door. He was at a loss whether he had seen Cain go inside earlier.

“Water.”

“... Yes? Yes!”

At Cain's short instruction, the servant hurried to bring the water, and the Count drank the cold water. After a while, the agitated Countess came into the room. She held the hands of the Count, checking Cain, and the panting family doctor also rushed in.

"How's my father's condition?"

Cain asked, and the countess's cold eyes followed. After the doctor examined the Count with enthusiasm, he looked incredulous.

"It's hard to believe, but he won't be in a coma anymore."

"My God..." The Countess wept and kissed the Count's hand.

Cain didn't know what she really felt, but she looked like she was giving thanks to God. Cain, who had managed to stop himself from furrowing his forehead at his doctor's hopeful remarks, asked him what he was curious about.

"Well, when will his body be able to move?"

"His body... has no response yet, so I can't guarantee anything."

"What about speaking? He can't even turn his head. What's going on with that?"

"... I can't guarantee that either."

'Then, could he become unable to speak or move for the rest of his life? He just woke up, but it was the worst. It might have been better if didn't open his eyes.'

“Oh, my God, honey...! What can I do?” After hearing what the doctor had said, the Countess buried her face next to the Count with a cry that sounded like the world had collapsed.

Cain also tried to look frustrated with his mouth covered and pretended to join in the grief. Actually, he was happier than anyone else. So the Count's room was filled with the Countess's mournful voice for some time.

“... What's going on, everyone?”

And in a moment, Aria, who returned from a belated outing to meet the businessmen, visited the Count's room, where people huddled together. The servants and maids were filling the hall in front of the Count's room for some news.

Since that incident, the Count's room had been frequented by servants only when they had a job to do, so why were there so many people today? Wondering, Aria approached them.

“Miss...! Please go inside quickly!”

The servants and maids, who recognized her even before she reached the Count's room, urged her to hurry inside. They all had urgent faces. This made her wonder if the Count was dead. As she hurried into the Count's room, she saw the Count, who was looking at her.

“... Father?”

She rushed to the side of the Count, who had awakened. She thought the Count was already dead rather than awake.

“Oh my god... When did he wake up?”

The doctor began to explain to Aria, who asked him, that even the count was in bad shape. The expression of Aria who was hearing his explanation gradually darkened. He was like a dead man just with his eyes open! What was the difference from not waking up in this way?

"I think the damage to his spine while he fell has had a big impact..."

'I can't believe he has to live like this for the rest of his life.' As she glanced at Cain, who stood next to her at the terrible news, he was frowning with his palm covering his mouth. 'Don't tell me your hidden face is smiling.' With a plausible assumption, Aria asked the doctor,

"What should I do to make my father feel better again?"

"... Yeah?"

"What should I do to make him move a little bit? We have to do something."

At Aria's question, the doctor felt embarrassed. He had no answers, but she could feel keenly that there was no way to do it.

The Countess squeezed out her crying voice and said, "There must be a way! When he woke up earlier, he moved his fingers a little!"

The doctor opened his eyes wide and asked again if that was true.

"Would I really lie in front of my sick husband?"

"Well, it's not like that. If that's true, it means there's plenty of room for recovery! It's possible that he'll be able to recover as much as he can, depending on his efforts!"

The doctor's face brightened up. The Countess and Aria also had a big smile. While such a fake family smiled for the Count, the real son, Cain, stuck to his serious face alone.

Aria pointed this out without missing it. "Are you not happy with that? He's awake, and the doctor says there's a chance for Father to recover."

"... That's not it. It's just because I can't believe it."

Aria laughed at Cain's late reply. He was shameless as he had plotted to kill his own father by joining his sister.

"So do you? I'm sure that if our father recovers, the county family will be able to get back to its original form, and the work of Mielle who is insisting on repeatedly being unjust... will be solved, right? I don't think Mielle pushed him either..."

She mentioned Cain, who had been involved in it. When Aria put Mielle's name in her mouth, a wave rose in the eyes of the Count, who had been lying motionless, and his fingers moved a little.

"Well, they are really moving!"

The doctor, who was examining the Count's condition again, saw that and was excited to explain the treatment to help the Count recover.

"For now, you can start by massaging his body. He'll surely be able to walk again in no time if you consistently do that. You can leave the massaging to the servants if you want..."

Against the backdrop of the doctor's voice that resonated throughout the room, Cain, with a very small voice, continued what he was saying earlier, "Oh, no, no. That can't be true. I'm very happy, but I'm just a little surprised."

"Are you? My brother thinks about my father very much. I want him to recover soon, so you can tell him who the real culprit is."

Along with the smiling Aria, Cain raised his mouth awkwardly. It looked as if he were crying, and Aria's smile became even stronger.

* * *

Aria and the Countess, who left behind the servants who massaged the Count's entire body as advised by the doctor, took a short rest in the garden. In front of the Count, the Countess had wept and rejoiced, but the face of the Countess, who was drinking tea, was full of relief.

"I'm glad my father woke up."

"Yes."

There was little joy in the face of the Countess, who answered Aria's words. Rather, she looked a little tired from her exaggerated performance.

When Aria realized this, she made the maids leave and asked her what she really wanted,

"You don't look very happy, do you?"

"That's the same for you. What do you want to ask?"

The Count was an important figure who had changed the future of Aria and the Countess, but it was a natural result because he had always excessively defended his bloodline and treated her mother and her as just beautiful ornaments.

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‘I wonder if there is anyone in this mansion who will truly treat him well. Besides, how would he feel if he finds out that he was betrayed by his own blood and was comforted by his so-called ornaments?’

Aria laughed then said to the Countess, “I’m sorry, but I won’t let Mielle be left untouched although my father woke up. I will also punish Cain even if the county family is doomed.”

“What are you sorry for? That’s a very good judgment. You can’t leave the snake strangling. I’ll help you, too.”

The Countess gritted her teeth as if she had reminded her of Aria who had been falsely accused. She was terrified because she couldn’t take a step out of the room.

If Aria had no background, she would be afraid of the Count and his children even though she was the Countess, but Aria had already won numerous supporters and powers, and she even had the Crown Prince on her back.

Therefore, it would be better to trample on them and get the virtue of a grown-up daughter and son-in-law rather than to curry favor with a man who treated her as an ornament.

While Aria and the Countess were resting in the garden, Cain went into the Count's room alone. Cain told the servants, who were massaging the Count's body, to go outside.

"But, but the doctor..."

"I have something to talk to my father for a while, so do it again later."

'Talk to the Count? Is he in a position to talk now?' The servants hesitated to go out, but they still did. He sat by the head of the Count who was staring at him.

"Father."

When he called him, the Count blinked. There was no change in his face, but it was a reaction that seemed to be asking why. At Cain's casual appearance, Cain hesitated a little and then opened his mouth again.

"Mielle... she's in jail now."

Cain's words brought waves back into the Count's eyes. He had thought she might have been punished for pushing him down, but he didn't know she was in jail.

He had just woken up and hadn't heard anything about Mielle. What Mielle had done was a terrible, immoral crime, but it was enough if he dismissed and covered it as an unfortunate incident in the family.

'But prison? Why? Who in the world accused her?' Cain continued to speak as he saw the color of the Count's face becoming black.

“She was... on the charge of trying to kill her father. She’s been in trouble because I couldn’t get the permission even if I applied for bail. I think... it’s because the Crown Prince is involved in the middle.”

The Count rolled his eyes when the Crown Prince’s name suddenly appeared. It was shocking that Mielle was in prison, but it seemed to ask why even the name of the Crown Prince came out.

“Well, in fact, Aria was driven to the criminal at first. Then the Crown Prince stepped in.”

As he was unable to tell the whole truth, he said some parts, taking off their faults, and the Count closed his eyes. It was Mielle who had intentionally taken him to Aria’s room, so he seemed to be making a rough guess. There was nothing to benefit from continuing this story, so Cain quickly changed the topic.

“Anyhow, Mielle said she had made a mistake, and she’s very worried about you. She cries every day and regrets her mistake. So, please help Mielle.

Cain’s words sank the Count’s eyes low.

‘Mistake?’ At that time, the face of Mielle, who had pushed him down the stairs, was as vivid as if it was painted. It was never the look of a person making a mistake. It was a clear intention. Still, Cain continued to stress that she had made a mistake until the Count’s face was full of tiredness.

“... If you are in a state you can’t answer, I must have been too talkative. I’m afraid you’re tired today, so I’ll leave now. Take a good rest.”

Cain, who was afraid that his mistake would be revealed if he defended Mielle any longer, went out of the Count's room at the right time. In the empty room, where Cain had left and no one was present, the Count, who had been staring at the ceiling for some time, soon closed his eyes.

In his eyes, many of the karma he had done fell into tears. His own children that he thought were on his side were too heartless, but only his new wife and stepdaughter were sincere. Even his most loved Mielle tried to kill him. Cain had struggled to say that it had been a mistake, but the Count, who clearly remembered the look of Mielle while pushing him, felt keen that it was not a mistake. Tears didn't stop at the feeling of being denied everything that he had done so far.

They were all his karma. It was a matter of his own accord. It was an irreversible past that he only realized now that he could no longer lift a finger.

While looking back at his life and shedding tears of regret and resentment, the Countess, who had been away for a while drinking tea with Aria, entered the room. As if she had had no leisurely face, the Countess hurried up to the Count, making a very worried face.

"Where are the servants? Why are you alone? Are you feeling better? Would you like some water? No, do you want me to massage you? Oh, my God... look at these tears, are you hurt somewhere?"

When she saw the Count's terrible state, the Countess was worried about him, and the Count's tears that he was holding back burst out again. Though she was a woman of humble origin, she must have been a warmer woman than anyone else.

Nevertheless, resentment and bitterness were in his heart at what he couldn't express anymore. If she knew this or not, the Countess smiled brightly and held his hands.

“Now that you’ve got your doctor’s words and you’re awake, you’ll get better soon. I’ll do my best to help.”

As if he had found a ray of hope in the face of the talking Countess, the Count glistened his eyes.

* * *

With the dedication of the Countess, the proper prescription of his physician and the constant efforts of everyone in the mansion, the Count was soon able to get his energy back. As his doctor said, his lower body showed no signs of improvement, but it was possible for him to move his arms or hands a little bit. Of course, he couldn’t pick things up or turn around unless he had someone to help him.

“Would you like some water?”

“Yes.”

He could also speak briefly. She didn’t know if it was because he was not feeling well yet or because he didn’t want to talk, but he often answered the Countess’s questions.

“By the way, today is Mielle’s trial day. Shall we go there for a while?”

“... No.”

Despite Cain’s relentless efforts, the Count offered no help for Mielle. Despite Cain’s efforts to bring news of the poor Mielle often... Of course, it was the Countess’s effort. She helped him to stand firm as he had been shaken his heart.

"You'd better take good care of Mielle...? Aria said it was okay, and... but I think the good child should be given a chance to repent..."

"..."

The Count shook his head faintly. Even though it was a small move that wouldn't be noticeable if she didn't look closely, the Countess nodded her head as if she knew it.

"She's a good kid, so she'll soon understand what you mean."

The Countess massaged his hand to justify the Count's coldness of abandoning her own daughter. There was not a shadow in her smiley face.

"Come to think of it, the doctor strongly advised me that you should take a rest and recover in a resort. Why don't you buy a villa at this time? A villa where you can get a good rest. I'll check it out and buy it without bothering you."

"... Ok."

No matter how much the Count's condition improved, he would not be able to live and work normally. Therefore, it was clear that the county family would fall into Cain's hands as it was.

'So why not take away even the property in return for humiliation and persecution?' The Countess, who had a chance to take the property from the Count, smiled brightly at him, who believed in her and answered yes.

* * *

“Considering the Count’s awakening, I’m sentencing Roscent Mielle to five years of house arrest.”

At Frey’s sentence, Mielle collapsed again to the floor. ‘House arrest? Why should I be punished when my father is not dead? And why didn’t my father request for a plea for mercy?’

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Editor Group: Liber Reverie

“Mielle, you can stay in the mansion and persuade your father. I’m sure he’ll forgive you soon if you show remorse. You’d better see your father as soon as you get to the mansion.”

Cain whispered quietly to Mielle. For the nobles, house arrest was not a bad ruling. In any case, the detention in the house was not only allowed outside the mansion, but it was possible to stay free inside. She could invite guests to have tea time in the garden. It meant that she could not just go out, but she was free inside.

Besides, didn’t the sentence decrease from twenty to five years? It was clear that if he applied for bail consistently, she would be released before serving her sentence. Before that, the Count might have forgiven her. At Cain’s words, Mielle nodded reassuringly.

“... I understand. By the way, did Miss Isis send me a reply? What did she say?”

“That’s...”

As Cain hesitated to answer, Mielle realized that Isis had rejected her.

Frey added an exception, without giving her to be caught in the shock that followed.

“However, since you have to stay in the mansion with two victims, detention is limited to the room used by Lady Mielle until now.”

“... What do you mean?”

“It means that you can’t come out of your room. In addition, a request has been made from the imperial family—you have not been questioned about the hallucinogen yet, so you need special care.”

‘What’s this? That’s a crazily unfair sentence! With all the servants and guests of the mansion watching, am I supposed to be questioned about the hallucinogen I didn’t take? Should I get stuck in the room and hear that wicked woman laughing? Do I have to watch the guards and the investigators go in and out of the room, and see the servants look askance at me?’

Mielle fell flat on the floor because of the unprecedented ruling. She got dizzy. Unconsciously, her tears drenched the floor. She would rather die than suffer such shame and humiliation. Even though she had done everything by herself, she felt unjust and unfair because the cause was Aria.

‘I’ll never let her go...!’

As soon as the sentence fell, Mielle was soon able to move on. When they saw an old carriage, surrounded by six guards, headed for the mansion of Count Roscent, each of them was talking, imagining a figure in the wagon.

“She said she was going to appeal, but it must have been decided by house arrest.”

“My God. How can a victim and an offender stay in one place?”

"My acquaintance worked at the court, and she said that she will be detained in her room and not the typical house arrest."

"In her room? That's a terrible punishment as well."

"I heard there's a charge about hallucinogen, and they're going to investigate it in the mansion. That's why they will lock her in her room."

"Oh, my God... That's the worst. I can't believe that that graceful lady would do such a thing... I feel like I've been cheated."

"The rumors were all the opposite. The rumors of a saint and a wicked woman... There have been rumors that it's been a little strange, but this case has definitely turned out to be true. The wicked woman was Lady Mielle, and she had overlaid all her sins against the benevolent Aria. It's a common story in novels, isn't it?"

The wagon was old and Mielle could hear all their gossip. Her fists trembled as she wanted to tear up their mouths which made rumors. Her slightly grown nails dug into the palms of her hands and tore her flesh.

'How dare...!'

However, after arriving at the mansion, Mielle's condition did not improve.

"Please, please let me see my father!"

She cried and wanted to ask for forgiveness from the Count because this was her only chance. However, she only heard the Countess's cold answer.

"Unfortunately, he doesn't want to see you."

“... What? I want to hear that directly from my father!”

Aria suddenly appeared and shrugged her body before Mielle, who was about to rush to the Countess.

“Oh, my God, I’m scared. Mom, stay away.”

“... You, you! How dare you!”

As Mielle screamed at the gaze of Aria, who looked at her as if she was a bug, the guards, who had arrived at the mansion with the carriage, hurried to shut Mielle’s mouth and overpowered her.

“The hallucinogen is really scary. It has made a person change that much... They have to start investigating and treating her as soon as possible. Isn’t that right, brother?”

Of all occasions, Aria stood beside Cain and said so, Cain, who would save Mielle, closed his mouth and looked at the situation with his arms folded. He seemed quite embarrassed because Aria rarely clung to him.

‘How can this happen?’ Blood was likely to pour out from her eyes filled with sorrow and anger. Mielle was caught in her room as if she had been dragged away, and she had to receive the cold eyes of the servants and maids.

“You’d better not think useless, lady, because the investigation is about to begin.”

With the cold voice of a guard, there was a chain-winding sound outside the closed door. Seeing no sound of distant footsteps, the guards, who had just warned, seemed to be guarding the room outside.

‘Why, why! All this was to put the ugly girl back in her original place! In addition, it was to have what she originally had to have a little faster in return. But what is the situation like now?’ She lost everything and was stigmatized and was stuck in her room. Isis and Cain, who she had believed would help her, acted like they didn’t know her.

Trapped in a clean room, as if all the dangerous goods had been put away, she screamed for a while and squeezed out her tears. It was because there was no place to relieve her bitterness.

After squeezing tears all day long until she was hoarse, Mielle suddenly opened her own secret space as if something had come up. Like Aria, she also had a secret space in her room for one person.

There, Mielle, who took out a box, wiped away her tears from her eyes. The contents of this box were the only thing that could save her.

* * *

“Ms. Isis. The letter has arrived.”

“Really? Who sent it?”

“That’s...”

The butler was speechless at Isis’s question. Isis also sighed when she noticed that the uncomfortable opponent had sent the letter. ‘Why does she keep bothering me when I had already thrown her away?’

Furthermore, rumors about Mielle were terrible, if she got involved with her for nothing, there would be useless rumors even to herself. It was not long before going to the Kingdom of Croa, and she pretended not to know her as much as she could, but she had a headache as Mielle sent a letter every day.

"If she keeps sending these letters, why don't you just send her a reply?"

At the careful advice from the butler, Isis put down the document that she was reviewing. She thought it would be better to refuse at a single stroke than to continue this troublesome connection.

"Read it roughly and give me a summary."

"All right."

So Isis, who ordered it, took the document back into her hands. It was the document sent from the Kingdom of Croa, so she had to carefully examine it and proceed to strike the Crown Prince who had made herself, the Duke, and the Aristocratic Party this way.

After Isis squeezed her temples again, she picked up the document again and began to concentrate. She examined it carefully so that there were no omissions or mistakes. No matter how much he had the same purpose of attacking the empire, her opponent was the king of a country.

However, the face of the butler, who opened the letter next to Isis and reviewed the contents, began to turn pale.

"Ms... Ms. Isis. I think you should see the letter for yourself...!"


Isis furrowed her forehead and asked why, because the man, who was always dignified and had the appearance of being a butler of the Duke family, stuttered.

“What’s going on? What does it say?”

“That’s...”

Despite Isis’s urging, the butler could not give a quick answer. Eventually, Isis, who could not overcome her frustration, took the letter from him and began to read for herself what had surprised the butler so much.

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THE VILLAINESS TURNS THE HOURGLASS NOVEL (HTTPS://READLIGHTNOVELS.NET/THE-VILLAINESS-TURNS-THE-HOURGLASS.HTML)

Chapter 186 (<https://readlightnovels.net/the-villainess-turns-the-hourglass/chapter-186.html>)

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Editor Group: Liber Reverie

[Ms. Isis. I understand you are going to abandon me. I admit that I made a big mistake, but don't forget that it wasn't my work alone, and I have letters exchanged with Ms. Isis. In the letters, there is also a story about that woman and His Highness the Crown Prince. It's also written what Ms. Isis will do in the future. If you ignore this letter again this time...You will have to be prepared for what I will say.]

"... Ha."

'How wicked she is!' Isis crumpled the letter in her hands and threw it to the floor. 'She dares to threaten me?' She wanted to go to the mansion of the Count of Roscent immediately and twist her neck, but she barely endured her desire and emptied the warm tea with her trembling hands.

The butler had guessed her mind as he had read the letter in advance, and he hurriedly prepared the cold water. Isis, who emptied the cold water in a single gulp, burst into laughter as if she had been embarrassed.

"How will I kill her? Huh?"

"Ms. Isis..."

The problem was that she had written everything in the letters without hesitation because she had thought she would never betray her. She would never have done such a thing if she had known Mielle was so stupid. Maybe it was because she had thought Aria was an easy target that she couldn't get rid of the evidence thoroughly.

Isis, who clearly remembered what was left in the letters, closed her eyes and buried herself deep on the sofa. It was too risky to pass, so she needed to worry.

'No, what's the use of agonizing?'

From the beginning, she had known she couldn't throw her away and started. No, she had done it because she hadn't known she was going to face such a tragedy with that vulgar bitch and the Crown Prince, the scarecrow.

The letters did not have her direct instructions, but they contained quite a few metaphors, which were enough for the Crown Prince to attack her under the pretext. If Mielle, who was being investigated as a sinner, had revealed it, she would have been involved in this incident.

'I can't help it. First of all, I have to listen to what she wants.'

As she could no longer weaken her power, Isis, who breathed a deep sigh, straightened her posture and said to the butler,

"... Paper and pen."

"... Yes."

Isis gave the written letter, which asked what Mielle wanted, to the butler, and wrapped her head, thinking about how to finish the wicked rat.

* * *

[I wouldn't throw you away Lady Mielle. I was just a little busy going to Croa. I'll get back to you soon.]

Mielle blushed at the hope she had obtained after several letters to Isis. It was foolish of her to listen to such threats. She had been asked to incinerate the letters they had exchanged even before things went wrong, but she had gathered them in case and finally achieved what she wanted.

'If I keep them there, no one will ever find it.'

She had confided with Cain just in case. She had also asked to punish Isis with them if she went wrong. It was disturbing to leave it to him, who was possessed by a daughter of a prostitute, but unfortunately, she had no one else to turn to.

She wanted to ask for help from her father, but the Count seemed to have no intention of helping her at all. She heard he was hard to move, but no matter how hard he was, he never called her. And she cried in sorrow, but rather, she felt injustice and anger.

'My father abandoned me first. If I had known this would happen, I would have pushed him higher.'

In a terrible imagination, Mielle gritted her teeth.

Now the only person Mielle could rely on was Cain. No matter how possessed he was by a prostitute's daughter, he wouldn't abandon his own sister. So she waited for Isis to contact her endlessly, and suddenly there was an uproar outside.

When she looked outside through the windows that were tightly closed, she could see a colorful carriage that she couldn't easily see. It was a carriage with a seal that Mielle knew, though it was a little far away.

'Don't tell me...!'

It was none other than the Crown Prince who got off the wagon. She could see Aria, who had always been busy, if she had gotten in touch beforehand, greeting him with joy, even refusing to go out. Next to her was the Countess.

Although she could not see in detail as the iron bars were added in and out of the windows to prevent her escape, they enjoyed the joy of reunion in front of the carriage for a long time. It was so disturbing.

Two knights armed thoroughly were seen behind the Crown Prince. A decently dressed aristocrat was also with him. If his purpose was simply to meet Aria, his followers would not have accompanied him. It was clear that there was another purpose.

Then she narrowed her eyes and doubted, and Asher, who had finished his reunion with Aria, raised his head and turned to her room. As she had the guilt of sin, she felt her heart sink heavy. It was only then that Mielle realized that he had come to see her.

"If you don't have a schedule today, why don't you go out with me?"

"It's not that I have a schedule. I was going to go to the academy when Mr. Asher returned. Sarah said she have a class today."

"... I've visited on the wrong day. I wish I had checked in advance."

A moment later, the voices of Aria and Asher from outside the door made the whole body of Mielle nervous. She had been focusing on Isis for a while, and she had forgotten the investigation for the hallucinogen, but she couldn't believe the Crown Prince would visit her himself.

"Can you spare me a little time, though? If you don't have time, I'll go with you to the academy."

"Everyone will be surprised if you do."

"I'm hoping. That way, there will be fewer people who can go near you. I'm always worried."

"I'm always thinking about you, but Mr. Asher is too worried."

"I can't help but worry. Don't you feel the gaze around you? If I could, I'd follow you around and all those eyes..."

As if to warn her, the voice of Asher was gloomy. Aria, smiling a little, cut off his words with a gentle voice as if to placate the child.

"I see. Let's talk after we finish our work. I have to prepare. It wouldn't be a bad idea to go out with Mr. Asher's wagon."

At the end of their conversation, Mielle backed away to the furthest wall from the door as she was surprised. Sure enough, there was the sound of the iron chains loosening, which had been firmly locked. She could hear the sound for a long time.

Then, a moment later, the Crown Prince and two knights, who she had seen through the windows, and a nobleman, who she didn't know, came into sight. Next to him was Aria, accompanied by a maid. Asher, a cool-faced man who was completely different from Asher who Mielle remembered, pointed to her and ordered the knights. He looked as if he were looking at a troublesome baggage.

"Drag her out."

As soon as the order of Asher fell, two knights went straight into the room and seized Mielle's arms. They seemed to be really trying to pull her out since Asher ordered them to.

"Where, where am I going?"

Mielle, embarrassed, asked, but no one minded her. They forced Mielle out of the room with a strong squeeze on her arms beyond necessity.

"Well, I'll just go out on my own...!"

"There can't be such a choice for a criminal."

Tears welled up in Mielle's eyes at the words of the nobleman, who was following her with a sneer. She didn't know where she was being dragged, but at this rate, it was clear she would be consumed as entertainment for those below.

"I thought you lost your weight a lot, but you're fine. I'm sure you haven't had much trouble yet."

Her anger flared at Aria's voice, which ran through her ear only. It was similar to what Mielle had done before Aria had been killed for being a wicked woman.

“It’s all because of you! If it wasn’t for you! If it wasn’t for you!”

Suddenly, Mielle made a scene, and Aria shrank into fear, pretending that she didn’t know. It was a clear expression and gesture of a victim.

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Editor Group: Liber Reverie

The abominable sight deepened Mielle's anger, and her arms were strongly tightened by the knights. Aria raised the corners of her mouth as if to make fun of her. It was in Mielle's eyes and she was struggling.

-Slap!

Suddenly, the pain was felt in her cheek, and her vision changed in an instant. And there was silence in the hall which was noisy with the severe struggle of Mielle.

She did not know that was happening. As she slowly turned her head back to the other side, she saw Aria, who opened her eyes wide and covered her mouth with her palms, as if she was truly surprised.

"If you make any more fuss, I'll put you in the Imperial Underground Prison."

It was the Crown Prince who uttered a warning recitation. As if he had touched something dirty, he shook his hand and strode forward.

"Oh, my God, look at that swollen cheek...!"

Left behind Annie's mocking remarks, Mielle was dragged away in embarrassment. Shock, fear, and confusion of the first violence caused to stop Mielle's thinking.

The interrogation was supposed to be done in the lounge, and she faced servants and maids of the mansion several times as she passed the hall and stairs to the lounge. They all glanced at Mielle's red, swollen cheek with astonishment. Unlike when dealing with Aria, the cold Crown Prince's walking also caused questions for them.

"...!"

As soon as she reached the lounge, Cain stood in front of the lounge as if he had been waiting. Cain looked at his sister's cheek for a long time, apparently surprised by Mielle's poor appearance.

Asher described the situation with a light smile. "She didn't follow the directions, making a fuss. She dared to run into the victim, Lady Aria. She still seems to have no sense of guilt. The detention in the mansion seems more comfortable than I thought."

Cain, who hesitated for a moment at the words, turned his gaze away from Mielle.

"... Please come in."

The expression of Cain who answered like that was very complicated. It was close to the expression that he wanted to get angry, but couldn't. Asher looked at Cain as if he looked at Mielle, and he soon turned to the lounge and entered the parlor.

"Brother...!"

Mielle, who was dragged behind him, called Cain anxiously, but he could not give Mielle any answer.

In the parlor where the door was closed, there were two knights, Asher, and Mielle, and an unknown nobleman. On the table lay refreshments prepared in advance by servants at Cain's instruction. Asher looked over the document handed by the nobleman, with a bothered face, and took one of them into his mouth.

"You're not the young adults, but the young ladies who are still underage, and you took hallucinogens... It's pretty shocking."

"Well, I...!"

When Mielle tried to make an excuse at the words of Asher, the knights holding her arms gave their strength. It seemed to mean that she should not make an excuse until the Crown Prince himself asked questions. 'I'm trying to say no, but I can't even bring it up!' Mielle was so bitter and resentful about the whole thing.

"How many ladies took hallucinogens except you?"

In fact, he did not check whether or not it was true, but he was convinced that they had taken hallucinogens, and when asked on the premise of it, Mielle shook her head vigorously and denied it.

"No one really took any hallucinogens...!"

"Really?"

The expression of Asher, asking again, was very apathetic. It was as if he were listening to a useless story. The nobleman next to him did not seem to value much of Mielle's answer.

"However, since there is no proof that it is not, you can't prove it."

“There’s no proof of that we did that, is there?”

Mielle was furious at Asher’s insistence, but it was soon denied by him.

“There is.”

“What? That’s ridiculous...!”

Asher recited her sins personally to Mielle, who was stuttering.

“You strongly insisted that you had seen Lady Aria that was not in the mansion at that time, and you wouldn’t make such an argument unless you had taken a hallucinogen. Actually, it was you who had pushed the Count.”

The nobleman replied affirmatively to the words of Asher,

“Maybe the hallucinogen ingredient was still in her body. Maybe she hid it in her room and took it.”

“There’s a point. Write it down like that.”

“Yes, Mr. Asterope.”

The nobleman began to write something on the papers at the instruction of Asher. He seemed to write that Mielle had not yet escaped the hallucinogen.

She began to struggle in response, “Well, that’s enough! Stop it! I really didn’t take any hallucinogens! It’s just your trust! Why don’t you listen to me? Why doesn’t anyone believe me...?!”

It was very sad to see her resisting with tears scattered over her eyes. It seemed genuinely unjust. If the investigator was not Asher, he would change his mind a little bit and might try to release the injustice.

“... Okay. I'll forgive you if you tell the truth from now on. My heart aches when a young lady utters such a great pain. Is it true that you saw Lady Aria that day, really?”

Unexpectedly, he asked Mielle with a very serious face, whether it was the same as Asher. He looked as if he would give her a last chance.

‘That can't be true.’ In addition, even the question was strange. ‘Of all the many questions, why would he ask about it again?’

Doubts sprang up. Aria's lover, he couldn't help herself. But it seemed to anyone that the current Asher would help Mielle. Mielle, who had hesitated a little, glanced sideways. There were two knights together, including the unknown nobleman, who had the potential to be witnesses if Asher would back out later.

Of course, if she were sane, she would have quickly realized that they would not be able to take her side, but now she was in a state of mental straits and was unable to think properly. Then she trusted Asher and began to confide in him.

“Oh, yes! I really saw her. She was in the room. I called her. My father was in the hallway, too.”

“Well, what did you mean you saw me?”

“That's...”

She recalled the memory that she had shouted like that in the court, and Mielle, who hesitated for a while, nodded her head and said yes. She believed in Asher's words that he would forgive her if she was honest with him.

"... I saw you suddenly appear and take my sister."

"Gone like a vision?"

"That's... Yes..."

"It looked like magic, didn't it? I showed up at an important moment and took Lady Aria and disappeared."

"... My God. That's, that's right! It looked magical! You'd really gone! I'd been wondering if I'd seen it wrong for a long time! But you also showed up at the place!"

Asher described the situation at that time with such accuracy as to be portrayed, and Mielle nodded her head in excessive affirmation. It was clear that he had appeared magically and taken Aria away.

'Did he really move in space?' It was a ridiculous assumption, but assuming so, all the puzzles fit. All he had to do was move through space to show up where he couldn't get there on time!

'If this fact is revealed, my sin will also disappear. The evidence will be useless. If so, I will regain the title of the saint, and the vulgar wicked woman will go back to being a wicked woman.'

While looking at Mielle, who smiled brightly with the thoughts, for a short while, Asher, who looked serious, smiled at the corners of his mouth. Mielle's whole body stiffened to the look of mockery. 'He's been listening seriously for a while now, but what the hell is going on here?'

"I think the hallucinogen is right."

The knights holding Mielle's arms sighed at the nobleman's words. It looked as if they regarded her words as the nonsense of a lunatic.

"Yes, that's what I think. She did it last time, but I didn't expect it again this time. Do you think it makes sense to tell me that I disappeared like smoke? I think she's had it for a long time. Magic, that's ridiculous."

"It's a terrible drug for such a young lady. I don't know how many more nobles we'll have to investigate."

"For now, we should start investigating the young ladies who participated in the party. It's true that she took a hallucinogen, so I don't have to accompany you in the future. Investigate her thoroughly and find out where it came from."

"Yes, I see. At this point, I'll root it out thoroughly."



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Editor Group: Liber Reverie

Mielle's eyes began to shake like a sailing boat that met a typhoon, with a very simple finish, dismissive of herself as if she were not there.

'He said he'd forgive me if I'm honest with him, but why is this conclusion that I've taken the hallucinogen? The Crown Prince clearly described it as if he knew it, agreeing with me and calling it out magic!'

When something was going wrong, Mielle stammered and asked Asher, "You said you'd forgive me if I am honest with you... I told you the truth, but what are you talking about...?"

Asher answered, shedding a cold glance at her. "I said I'd forgive you, but I didn't say I'd take legal action. Besides, we can't make sure your words are true, can't we?"

"Yes, sir. What's certain now is that Lady Mielle has taken the hallucinogen."

Then Mielle, who realized that what Asher had said was a trap, lost her speech and fell to the floor in a panic.

"That's enough for today. As you saw it earlier, I have an important business to attend to."

“Oh, come to think of it, it isn’t the moment to waste your time in this useless work. I understand.”

After all, he got up from his seat, dismissing this important task, which would completely change the lives of countless people. The nobleman who came with him also put in his arms a document fully written something, saying, “The investigation was done smoothly,” and Mielle, who was also held up by the knights, was forced to rise. It was a short investigation that only fit in according to a predetermined result.

“No, wait a minute! Please! Really not!”

No one heard such a cry from Mielle. After a short interrogation, Aria came up to Asher with a very surprised look as they went out of the lounge.

Her appearance was almost unchanged compared to when she had said she was getting ready to go out. She seemed to have been curious about the result. Perhaps she had been curious about Mielle’s face, not the result, but the tears that she would have dropped.

“Are you done with it?”

“Yes, it was so obvious that she had taken a hallucinogen that we didn’t have to do a long interrogation.”

The servants and maids were also around. When he called out the hallucinogens she had not taken, they could not hide their astonished faces. As he saw them, they seemed eager to talk about this amazing news.

What an interesting story to hear was that she had tried to kill her father and even tried hallucinogenic drugs. Each of them might want to put together a fragmented puzzle and discuss how horrible things Mielle had done.

The unwritten rule that what happened in the mansion should not be taken out of their mouth was not related to this incident, because there were the Crown Prince and Aria to forgive them.

"I see... I hoped a little bit it's not..." Aria's gaze at Mielle, who was holding her arms, was colored with regret.

To console her, Asher suggested the change of surroundings.

Until just now, he had a cold look that seemed to be annoying, but it was gone now, and he faced Aria as if she was very cute, like another person.

"Why don't we go for a walk now as the investigation and the preparation are done? It would be nice to drink tea."

"But... I'm worried about Mielle... how can I be the only one to enjoy such luxury..."

"Don't worry. She's not going to be punished for anything she didn't. I'm worried you will fall."

Aria, who glanced at Mielle and hesitated, but nodded her head again, was truly detestable. 'Who drove me into this mud? Who really needs to be comforted is me, but why are those who don't pay any price to change their moods?'

Moreover, Cain, who was the only one who would help, only occasionally glared at Asher. 'Where did his pledge go when he said he would be acting as the head of the county family and lock up Aria?'

He seemed to be too busy every day just doing what the Count had to do, let alone Aria. So Aria was so friendly with the Crown Prince but he couldn't say anything.

Everything was pathetic. Everyone was foolish. The wicked woman who was really to be punished was laughing with happiness. She was so dark about herself that she must get the light. With such a sense of deprivation and injustice, there was no other way to resolve it, and she could see someone entering the mansion.

“...!”

He was a very familiar figure. He was the butler of the Duke family who she had been waiting for. He held a letter in his hand. Besides, he didn't order a servant to take, and the butler brought the letter himself. It was clear that the letter contained important contents of...

When the butler saw Mielle, who was caught by the knights, he was briefly embarrassed, and immediately handed over the letter to Cain, saying, “I have a letter to her.

“What letter?”

As everyone was present there, he asked Cain about the contents of the letter. Then Mielle was nervous and swallowing her saliva, and Cain, with a determined face, shook his head and answered, “It's a personal business. You don't have to know.”

Cain's response to the question of whether it was unfair that he had never stood up to Asher until now had a thorn in it. At most, it was the story of the letter, but Cain's excessive reaction made him laugh again.

“... Oh, I see. It was a letter from the Duke family, so I thought its destination was not you, but Lady Mielle, and I must have misunderstood.”

He called his remarks a misunderstanding, but his expression was with suspicion. It was a face that suspected that the real destination of the letter was Mielle.

It was the same with Aria. The eyes of Aria were fixed on the letter, who had just blushed so far, saying she was worried about Mielle.

In the end, Mielle, anxious that the letter that would save her would fall into the hands of the demons, opened her mouth in a trembling voice.

“This, this is the end of the investigation...? I want to go back to my room...”

The combination of psychological pressure and desire to live looked very sad and pathetic. They could think of her as if she were a saint.

“She looks really bad. We’d better get her some rest.”

For poor Mielle, the kind-hearted Aria said so, and the ungrateful permission of Asher fell so that Mielle could soon return to her room and restore stability.

Then, after a while, Cain, who asked for a visit, appeared with the letter. He looked very serious as if he had read the contents beforehand.

“Are you really going to accept this?”

“... Is there another way to do it? If there’s rebellion, I’ll be cleared of my sin, so there’s no other way.”

Cain bit his lips at Mielle’s reply and was overcome with anxiety.

“It would be better if you just wait like this and then try another trial again after the rebellion...”

“No, I can’t go on like this until then. You can help me run away well. Besides... I have something to say to Isis.”

She could be sure by the interrogation of Asher. It had to be told; what she had seen on that day without really taking the hallucinogen. So Mielle’s expression was as serious as ever.

—

[I’ll send a maid, so you can sneak out. We’ll leave straight for Croa, so there’s only one chance.]

By the time she was ready to read and memorize the contents of the letter, a maid came in with a meal.

Her face was full of freckles, so it was hard to recognize her features, but she was a maid with blonde hair and green eyes. Mielle jumped out of her seat, welcoming the maid whom she had never seen before.

“Please have dinner.”


“... Yeah.”

As the maid said, Mielle started eating. If she didn’t make any sound, they would be suspicious of her from the outside, and she crashed the dishes to make a sound. In the meantime, the woman on the opposite side took out the make-up tools from her arms and drew the freckles on Mielle’s face. She took off her clothes and exchanged them with Mielle.

The features themselves were too different to be perfect, but the maid's face was full of freckles and similar in height and shape, so it was hard to notice if they didn't look at her closely.

[Get out of here straight. A carriage is waiting at the entrance to the mansion.]

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Editor Group: Liber Reverie

After reading the words on her palm, she hid the joy of bursting and took the tableware. She thought she could get out of this hellish mansion at last, and even tears seemed to come out.

Now she and Isis were leaving for Croa, would rebel, and she vowed to kill the stupid Crown Prince and the vulgar bitch. She was about to leave the room with her head down, and the guard at the door called Mielle.

“Wait a minute.”

Her whole body stiffened with a feeling of her heart pounding. The guard asked Mielle, who was in a cold sweat and froze.

“I think the mealtime today is earlier than usual.”

“... Is that so? I just brought it as I was told...”

Otherwise, it was a high, thin voice, but it was like a child's, as she created a higher and thinner voice, to hide her voice. So she thought she made a mistake and bit her lips tightly, but the guard, who was thinking for a while, nodded.

“Really? Go. You have to get some water, right?”

“Yes, yes...”

As soon as permission fell, she hurried down to the first floor, and Cain who looked anxious was standing at the front door of the mansion. Mielle, who roughly laid down the tableware on the floor, hurried to him.

“Brother... No, Ma, Master.”

Then, as usual, she tried to call Cain, but she looked around and corrected it. It was an empty hall with no one in it, but just in case.

“You’re here. A carriage from the Duke family is waiting.”

Then the nervous Cain clasped Mielle’s hands. Mielle was stubborn and there was no way to help otherwise, but he seemed to worry about letting her sister, who had not yet grown up, go.

“... I’ve packed it up, just in case. Take it and use it when there’s an emergency.”

The pouch Cain handed over was full of expensive jewels. Isis was not going to make a fool of her because Isis had already been under threat by her letter, but Mielle felt more secure than leaving the mansion without anything.

“Brother...”

She had always swallowed her anger because he was not helpful, but she felt strange to be seen off like this. She hugged Cain once and quickly left in a prepared carriage right in front of the mansion.

It was sent by Isis. The carriage seemed to head straight for the Duke mansion, but then turned around and arrived just outside the capital. So, with uneasiness, as she carefully stepped out of the carriage at the order of the driver, two large, sturdy-looking carriages were waiting for Mielle.

One was a carriage for Isis alone, and the other was a carriage with maids and luggage. Isis, who got off the wagon upon Mielle's arrival, greeted her with a gentle welcome.

"Ms. Isis...!"

"Lady Mielle. I've been waiting. Did you have a hard time?"

"No, no! This is how Ms. Isis helped me!"

Like menacing and intimidating people, what they really wanted to ask each other was a deep-seated, pretentious smile. Isis wrapped around Mielle's shoulders and guided her to her carriage.

"I was about to leave. I'm not officially married yet, so I'll leave secretly. You know that, right?"

"Sure."

'Haven't we talked about it several times already?'

When she got on the wagon, Mielle fell asleep as it was covered with soft cushions to sleep. It was because she had been working all day on escape.

Isis, who hid a cold look from Mielle's appearance, asked, "The letters... did you bring them?"

“No, I couldn’t have brought something so important. I might be caught and kept it hidden. My brother said he would take good care of them.”

So when she answered in such a tone of voice that they would never find it, there was silence in the carriage for a moment. The letters were the things that would save her from hell. And something that would save her and protect her in the future, too.

‘I can’t tell you such important things like that easily. What a stupid question it is. Of course, after the treason, the value as evidence will become unclear, but until then, it would guarantee her freedom. So, before that, I’ll marry Oscar and create a new shield to protect me.’

So thinking of it, Mielle smiled, and Isis smiled along.

“Yes, I see. You did a great job. Please be careful not to be seen by anyone.”

So Mielle, who managed to find her freedom, left the empire with Isis and headed for the Kingdom of Croa. Although it was a carriage with two women on board, she did not go on vacation or trip, so it ran to Croa without stopping, except for a very short break for a meal and a replacement for a horse.

“From now on, You will be my maid, El.”

As soon as they crossed the border of Croa, Mielle nodded at Isis, who asked to do so. A new identity card was also included. It was a natural result because it was not possible for her to say boldly that she had fled in sin.

Rumors that Mielle had fled had spread quickly to other countries. As she had a quick movement in Isis’s carriage, she was not inspected, but from now on, she had to be careful.

"Oh, by the way, I forgot to tell you."

At the tone and expression of Mielle, who was very serious, Isis raised his eyebrows and urged her to speak the next words.

"I'm sure the princess knows. That wicked woman was really with me when my father fell down the stairs. And the fact that unless I was crazy, I wouldn't have taken the hallucinogen before something important."

At Mielle's words, Isis remained positive. Isis seemed to think that the only chance Mielle had ever had with so much love of Oscar would not have been ruined by lies and hallucinogens. Mielle, who gained confidence, confessed what she had guessed alone to seize another chance.

"That day... the Crown Prince really showed up. He suddenly appeared like he was moving through space. Then he hid himself with her right in front of me. It's like he moved through space again."

"... What are you talking about? Moving through space?"

When she heard the words carefully as if Mielle confided a secret, Isis asked again with a slight frown,

"So, the Crown Prince is doing magic!"

"..."

The forehead of Isis furrowed a little more, contrary to Mielle, who spoke as if it was a great secret. And what followed was sudden uncontrollable laughter, for a ridiculous delusion of nonsense.

“... I’m sorry, but I understand why you were accused of hallucinogenic drugs.”

“I’m telling you the truth... It makes sense to assume that the Crown Prince has the magic to move through space!”

“... I see.”

It was an affirmative tone, but it wasn’t the way. There was a deep suspicion on Isis’s face as she listened to Mielle’s story. Mielle, who noticed that Isis didn’t trust her, claimed several times that the Crown Prince had a strange power. Mielle said that until the carriage arrived in the capital of the Kingdom of Croa.

So Mielle continued to insist on the absurd power of Asher, and Isis, who was impatient, advised her,

“Okay, I know what you mean, and I think His Highness might have that kind of ability.”

“Ms. Isis...!”

She was about to be pleased, as she said that she believed her, but Isis continued her words that were not over yet, “But if you want to stay there for a long time, you’d better not say anything you can’t prove unless you want to be accused of taking a hallucinogen again. You know that the words without evidence are no help.”

“...!”

Mielle’s whole body stiffened with the tone as if she was carrying an annoying burden. ‘Really, the Crown Prince has a strange ability!’

“It’s true...”

If she was going to rebel, Isis should know. ‘How could she beat a man who could move through space?’ It was a matter of knowing for the Aristocratic Party and Mielle herself, not for Isis alone.

Still, Isis’s expression was cold, and Mielle could not speak anymore, and she was still silent. Then the carriage, which had been running for a long time, slowed down and then stopped moving.

“We’re here.”

And when she heard the voice outside, she realized that she had finally reached her destination, and when he removed the curtains from the window and looked carefully outside, she saw the magnificent castle.

‘Don’t say, is it a royal castle?’

She thought it would be late at night and they would take a rest somewhere, and enter the castle by day, but Isis was soon to be the Queen of Croa, and it was right to go to the royal castle.

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Editor Group: Liber Reverie

As she suddenly faced the royal castle, her steps of getting out of the carriage were very cautious. It was also because of the quietness of the royal castle, which was too quiet for its huge size. Mielle followed Isis in the back, looking sideways pretending to be a maid, and soon a group of people approached Isis and her party.

“I see Croa Lohan.”

Isis, who realized that it was Croa Lohan, the king of Croa, even though it was a distance that she could not confirm, took a courtesy. The knights and servants followed her, and Mielle also bent quickly.

“You’ve been struggling from coming away, Lady Isis.”

A moment later, the king of Croa, who had come closer, welcomed Isis’s visit with a kind voice. ‘Am I meeting the king of a country so simply?’ Then, realizing how great Isis was, Mielle glanced up at and checked the king of Croa.

‘He’s so young.’

He looked at a similar age of the Crown Prince of the empire. When she had heard Isis was going to marry the king of a country, she had thought he would be a middle-aged man, but he was a young man with a manly face.

‘It’s true that the great king of Croa died early in an unexpected illness.’

It reminded her of the fact that the prince who just became an adult had followed him, and Lohan, the young king of Croa, was a rare handsome man. He felt insidious to some extent, but because of that, he was more eye-catching.

Lohan, who had been in a conversation with Isis for a moment, glanced at Mielle as if he felt a glimpse at himself. Without knowing herself, the painted freckles had been erased and her neat face was seen.

Mielle, who had the sudden eye contact, was surprised and lowered her head and hid it from his view, and Lohan put her on the topic as if her reaction was funny.

“It’s amazing every time I see a blonde as there is very little blonde hair in Croa, and a pale green eye that looks like grass leaves... it reminds me of someone. Isn’t she like a fairy?”

“... Not common in the empire, but more than in Croa, and they are often born among the commoners.”

When he was interested in Mielle, who had to be quiet, Isis replied with nervousness without having time to rethink as she heard that he was reminded of someone.

Lohan asked her name with an interesting look,

“Well, I’m El...”

“El? It’s a name that doesn’t fit this beautiful girl.”

“Thank, thank you...”

Blushing her face, Mielle glanced at Lohan’s face with excessive praise. He stared at Mielle with a smile of interest and goodwill, as if he were appreciating her.

‘Perhaps, the king of Croa would take my words seriously!’

Mielle, who had only received the goodwill and kindness of all the people of the world, dared to speak to the king of a country first. She was sure that he would listen to her, as it had been so far, and it was something that she must tell in order to survive.

“Mr... Mr. Croa Lohan...! I have something I must tell you... that you must know.”

When a maid dared speak to the king of a country first, everyone in the place was suddenly hard as stone. The most embarrassing of all was Isis, who had just heard Mielle’s nonsense, and she stuttered and reprimanded Mielle,

“Eh, El!? What the hell is this...?! Can’t you shut up right now?”

Mielle squeezed her eyes shut and shrank back at the overreaction of Isis. She looked like a frightened baby cat.

Both of them were rude and frivolous, who dared to play in front of a king of a country, but Lohan, watching them for a moment, said with a meaningful smile,

“Okay, I’m interested. It’s late for today, so I’ll send someone tomorrow. I’m very curious about what it’s about.”

Isis's face was blue, and Mielle smiled brightly. 'If I accuse the Crown Prince's power and reveal it as a fact and make a great contribution to the rebellion, I believe that I will have a way to live without relying on Isis.'

* * *

"What the hell did you say that?" As soon as she entered the room, Isis, who had all the servants leave, was angry with Mielle. She had given so much attention on their way to Croa, but she had brought out the story of the Crown Prince to the young king of Croa, Lohan.

'You dared not to know who you were and lied!'

But Mielle could not judge the situation properly, and she spoke in a low voice, "He, he has to know, and he'll be ready. If not, he'll ruin everything you've done!"

"Lady Mielle!"

"He'll be embarrassed at first, but he'll believe me! It's true! If he doesn't believe me, he'll regret it."

Isis, who was angry at the continuing Mielle's claim, frowned and sighed. It had already happened, and Mielle was stubborn and even Lohan had offered to send someone. It was irreversible. If Mielle was a simple maid, she would say she would have been crazy and kick her out, but she was a bomb who had very important letters.

"If only you go wrong...!"

When Isis confessed her frustration, Mielle realized what she was worried about and added something to relieve Isis's worries. "Oh, my God. I was not wary of that. Don't worry. I'll take all responsibility for this. I swear."

With this, Isis's expression changed. If she had brought herself to the risk and killed herself, Cain, who had no place to attack, would not be able to release the letters. No, if she added that she had almost missed a big deal because of Mielle, he might have to live with a sinful mind and atone for the rest of his life. Isis had been worried about when and how to throw Mielle away anyway, so she thought it would not be too bad to use this opportunity.

"... Then you shall leave it in writing, and I shall send one to the mansion of Count Roscent."

'So I better make sure.' Isis took out the letter paper, and Mielle nodded. Mielle seemed to think that the young king of Croa would believe her, as a child who did not know what the world was, very foolishly.

"Okay."

Isis had never thought their relationship would fall out like this just a year ago. It was a relationship that she could be her family, but now they were enemies who hid sharp claws toward each other.

"I'll ask you to sign at the end, and I also want you to sign on top of the two letters, as proof that I didn't forge them."

"I see."

When Mielle handed both of the carefully written letters to Isis, Isis regained her bright face, satisfied, and somehow, she looked happy. Unlike Mielle, who was a fool, the wise Lohan could not believe Mielle's words.

They spent the night with different ideas and purposes and became the next day.

"His Highness calls you."

Mielle, who had been stiff with tension since last night, jumped up from her seat. She was nervous enough that she couldn't even make a good breakfast. She followed the servant, hoping that the young king of Croa would be wise and trust her; no, she thought, he would believe her because what she had seen was the truth.

She was breathing fast in front of Lohan's office, a long way from the quarters where Mielle was staying when the huge door opened without a word.

Mielle, surprised, bowed her head hurriedly, with a courtesy. "I see you, Your Highness."

"You don't have to give me such a courtesy, come closer."

She raised her head at Lohan's command and slowly approached him. His silver hair, shining in the light from the window, was a little mysterious, and for a moment she was taken away because he was uncommonly colored in the empire, and his gold eyes were as beautiful as the sun. It was a beauty that was different from Oscar's, which was always cool.

"I want to finish talking about what you wanted to say yesterday."

Mielle, who had been taken a moment by Lohan, was suddenly reddened with embarrassment. 'I was fascinated by a man's face when I came to tell an important story.' She blamed herself, and then she came to her senses, swallowed, and answered carefully,

"Ah, yes... you may already know, but the Crown Prince of the empire has a special ability and I thought I should let you know it. It will be a great distraction to your walk."

"Oh, it's disturbing to me? That must be important. What is the Crown Prince's special ability?"

Lohan, with a curious look, urged Mielle's next words, apparently interested in blocking his future walk, just as she had seen last night.

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Editor Group: Liber Reverie

The young king was a wise man as expected, and Mielle, who had relaxed a little and was confident, told the Crown Prince's secret.

"It's the ability to suddenly appear and hide as if he's moving freely through space."

He narrowed his eyes at Mielle's accusation. A special ability. He could move through space freely. He seemed to reflect on what Mielle said. Lohan's expression that had been interesting just before had been gone somewhere, and he was thoughtful with a very serious expression. At his suddenly changed attitude, Mielle touched her fingers and waited nervously for his response.

"Well, I don't understand what you mean. Even though he's the Crown Prince of the empire, is that possible?"

Lohan's face was full of questions, but it was not the same tone of reprimand or convulsion as the others, and it was purely a question of whether it was possible.

Mielle raised her voice and put her strength into her words. "I saw it myself!"

"You saw it yourself? The Crown Prince of the empire moving through space?... Where did you see it?"

“Well... at the mansion of Count Roscent of the empire. When I worked there for a while, I saw it... when the Count fell down the stairs. I saw him suddenly appear and disappear, like a mirage.”

‘What is the easy word to persuade as to the truth mixed with lies?’

Lohan replied while raising his eyebrows as she allegedly mentioned the case.

“At the mansion of Count Roscent...? Alas, you are talking about the terrible incident that her own daughter tried to kill her own father, the Count.”

Mielle’s case of pushing the Count down the stairs seemed to have spread beyond the empire to Croa. But the words “Aria pushed the Count” did not seem to have spread, and Mielle tried to cover up her rage that was rising again and corrected him.

“... So was the verdict, but I saw it. Lady Aria really pushed the Count and then the Crown Prince appeared, and they disappeared like smoke. It’s true!”

He raised the corners of his mouth and laughed at her offended look. She was not sure what it meant, so Mielle persuaded him again.

“I know you can’t believe it because I’m still having a hard time believing it myself... Poor Miss Mielle. But if I discuss lies, I’ll have a strict punishment, and I don’t need to say lies. I hope you will understand my desire to confess and help you a little.”

Mielle’s words, which even called herself poor, had some point unless she was mad, she would not claim to the king of a country that the Crown Prince had a special ability. If she was wrong, she could lose her head.

Of course, she was the maid Isis brought, and he could not have killed her so simply, but she could have been strictly punished, as Mielle had said. For example, her tongue would be cut off.

But the wiser Lohan did not make such a cruel decision; instead, he asked the person who had given him important information for a long time.

“Yes, I think it makes sense, but what do you think? Vika.”

She looked around, embarrassed by the sudden call of another man’s name, and she noticed a man sitting on a sofa at a corner she had not looked at before.

‘Layers Vika...?’

He was a nobleman of the empire who had occasionally advised Isis, and Mielle knew him well. As she had been hiding her identity and pretending to be a maid, her twitching nose reflected her nervousness and the cold sweat on her forehead.

Vika, who confirmed this, smiled strangely at the welcome face he had met for a long time. “I think it makes sense. I remember that His Highness the Crown Prince moved through areas strangely fast, and he was quite quick in that case, too. I couldn’t think of moving with the aristocratic lady.”

Luckily, Vika was going to pretend he didn’t know Mielle.

“And I don’t think it’s too bad to overestimate him for his special ability even if she’s lying.”

At Vika's strong supporting statements, Lohan nodded. Rather than underestimating and neglecting, as he said, there would be nothing to lose from overestimating and preparing thoroughly.

"All right, so I can believe what Vika says too, and I'll trust you."

Her legs were shaking at the satisfaction of his expression and answer because she was so nervous apart from the conviction that he would believe it. Lohan helped her as she didn't know when he had gotten up, and so his broad, hard chest touched the side of her face.

"Your, Your Majesty..."

"I'd like to have lunch with the benefactor who gave me valuable information, but do you have a schedule?"

His eyes and hair were shining, and she felt sweet, and he was beautiful enough to make Mielle's white, immaculate face red.

"I, I..."

'I have Oscar, and he is the man who will be Isis's husband.' She had never felt this way about another man except for Oscar, and when she stuttered, Vika answered on her behalf.

"She's a maid moving with Isis, and of course there's no particular schedule and Your Majesty, may I join you at your meal?"

"You ask me a matter of course."

She thought it was a story for two to eat, and she was overly nervous, but eventually, Isis also joined the lunch, and the four of them ate lunch. In the meal that followed, Isis, who had had no doubt that Mielle would be punished, stared at Mielle across the room, unbelieving.

"Your maid is very clever."

He seemed to have believed that the Crown Prince was moving through space and even praised her. He was quite cool and rational as she recalled from the written conversations with him. He was never a man to be convinced of the absurd delusion of a young girl. It was hard for Isis to understand what was happening.

"... Thank you." Isis was wary of him and answered. Although it was a very elaborate luncheon, she did not feel the taste of the food.

"I like your eyes, too. Those are the eyes of the one who is ambitious, so I want to talk to you a little more."

Mielle blushed and lowered her head. Lohan asked her, smiling as if she was cute.

"I would like to take her as my maid if Lady Isis will allow me."

He was even speaking out a word that was genuine or false and was being friendly to Mielle, who was blushing, unable to figure out who she was now. And Vika, who had arrived earlier than scheduled, was also friendly to Mielle.

Isis looked at Vika, not sure what was going on, but he shrugged and turned the topic away. Isis wondered how he had interpreted her gaze.

"Mr. Lohan, I think it's best to discuss the national marriage as Ms. Isis arrived in Croa."

“National marriage?”

Lohan suddenly asked back, at the words “national marriage.” It was as if he had never heard of it before, and Isis’s face was hard as stone.

“... Yes? Ah, yes. You decided to marry Isis, right?”

Vika also asked back as if he was in trouble. And then, understanding what Vika meant, Lohan stopped his meal and said, mockingly,

“Oh, that’s what you said. So did Miss Isis visit Croa for nothing? I think you’re mistaken, but it was a reward with the premise that if you take the Empire, and I’m not going to do it without proving your value. I’m sure I must have notified you in writing.”

‘What is that...? Shouldn’t we have a national marriage and attack the empire?’ Isis, who had been so embarrassed that she forgot to blink, looked at Lohan with a pale face. However, Lohan began eating again as if he had said something unscrupulous.

“Oh... did you? I didn’t know that far. Now I understand you have exchanged those words. I’m sure it’s better to do it.”

“Mr. Vika...?”

And even Vika, who was sure to know all about what had happened, took his side.

‘I started this asking his advice, and what the hell is this?’ Isis’s eyes wandered as if she had suddenly been thrown into the middle of a storm.

Vika laughed and added a word for Isis. “The empire will soon fall into your hands as the preparations are perfect, Miss Isis.”

“... I suppose so...”

Isis's mind was in a hurry. Her hands trembled, and the idea of attacking the empire as soon as possible to establish her position dominated her mind. There was a smile on the faces of Lohan and Vika as they watched her.

“Then our preparations are all done, so we'd better start right away, wouldn't we? Lady Isis?”

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Editor Group: Liber Reverie

As he asked Isis, Lohan smiled, and Isis, who was in a hurry, nodded and said yes. It was in a way that was not hers. Lohan said, smiling contentedly, and everything was as planned.

“Good. I thought it was time to move. I’m excited to see the end soon. Then, before we move forward, we’d better have a quick cup of tea and meet the Marquis of Piast.”

“The Marquis of Piast...?”

“Yes, he is a very important man for achieving my purpose. He is the one who prepared soldiers to send to the empire, and I think you will be greatly helped.”

If she remembered those papers exchanged in the meantime, It was clear that there were not a few people involved in this, but this was the first time that she was introduced to a person other than Lohan. When Isis was puzzled, Lohan added an explanation.

“He was very passionate about what he wanted because he was a man who had a strong desire. He was the one who has reported only in writing, but when he heard that Miss Isis was in the empire, he suddenly said he would report it in face-to-face. It’s not a pre-arranged event, but you can count on it.”

Because he added that she could expect it, Isis and Mielle waited for teatime, their eyes shining. Vika also seemed to expect it for another reason.

With such a complex feeling and emotion, they finished the luncheon and moved to the palace garden. There, the Marquis of Piast, who had arrived at the royal castle in advance, was waiting for Lohan in the garden.

"It's been a long time, Marquis. You've been here first."

"I see you, Your Majesty."

Lohan spoke to the Marquis of Piast in a friendly tone, while the Marquis looked hard and his head was lowered. He was a man of old age, who seemed to have already retired, with white hair.

'Does he have no children?' If so, he might have adopted a relative of his family, and it was doubtful to Isis and Mielle that he had kept the position of the Marquis until now.

"He is an old man who has his personal matter and has not been able to pass his title to his successor until he is old, but since he is the only Marquis of Croa, you should refrain from such a dumb face."

As Lohan hardened his facial expression as if he had read the strange feelings of Isis and Mielle, they realized their rudeness and quickly corrected their faces.

"I see the princess of the empire."

"Nice to meet you, Marquis Piast."

After such a short introduction, the conversation was cut off, and Lohan, who had taken a sip of tea alone in a tense atmosphere, led the conversation.

“Are the soldiers and knights ready to move anytime?”

“Yes, they are now in a state of being able to move to the empire.”

“That’s good. Did you say, five thousand people?”

“Yes, but I can get five thousand more.”

Mielle’s cheeks were red with excitement as she heard that a total of ten thousand people could head straight for the empire. It was still not enough to formally invade, but they were enough to hide in the empire with the help of Isis and the Aristocratic Party.

If they did the sudden attack, it would be a matter of time before she could take the Imperial Castle, and if the Crown Prince and Aria disappeared, she could make her sin disappear.

“What do you think, Lady Isis?”

“... I am very grateful.” Isis replied with her face flushed as if she had thought so too.

Unlike the documents exchanged, She had been surprised that he could not have a national marriage right now. However, it was delayed by the plan that was prepared to be overly perfect. And the apology for this was to go back to the empire and check the documents again, and later point out the young king’s mistake.

“Okay, then, we better arrange our men in the houses of the noblemen who follow the princess as planned and wait for the right time.

“Of course, I didn’t think of ten thousand people, but I have prepared enough, so I don’t think it’s too much.”

“There are ten thousand of us, so we’ll have to go around by dividing that number. It’ll take a long time to get them together. It may take months.”

Vika also spoke with a look of satisfaction, “Yes, it will cost a little more than I thought, but it will not be a bad wait.”

It was a plan to secretly wait for the soldiers not to be seen by the Crown Prince in the houses of noblemen and finally attack the Imperial Castle at the right time.

The great dream of deposing the Crown Prince who had insulted her and intercepted her power finally came and Isis spoke, unable to hide her excitement,

“Thank you, Marquis, for preparing so many men, and I think we should hurry back.”

She had no time to waste, and she had to hurry back and greet the soldiers, and then it would cost her a little less for all the expenses was paid by Isis and other noblemen.

The number of soldiers would increase, and the cost would be more than expected. So, as she said, the unexpected figure agreed with Isis.

“I’ll come with you.”

“What?”

At the sudden words of the Marquis of Piast, Lohan’s eyes widened because it was not in the plan. Isis also rolled her eyes to the story she had never heard.

“Marquis, do you feel senile?”

The Marquis of Piast, who gave an unpleasant look at Lohan, as he blamed it on his age, said,

“... Your Majesty, I have told you so many times that I have been looking for someone, so I will go to the empire and find her.”

“The Marquis would go himself? To the empire? You didn’t like the empire, and did you say you didn’t want to go again?”

“Yes, I did, but unfortunately I can’t afford to wait. My son’s misbehavior suddenly gets worse and my wife is very worried. So I’m going to send off some people and find her myself.”

The look on Marquis Piast’s face was full of concern, and that was why he had not yet passed on his title to his son. Lohan, who knew all about it, clicked his tongue and said,

“I can’t help it. I am afraid to send the Marquis to the empire, but I can’t stop you, considering your son.”

“Then I shall leave with the party of the princess.”

“Do it.”

The mood was so grim that it was hard to ask for details.

Isis, who had come to accompany the Marquis without knowing the reason, fell into thought as she drank tea, and only Mielle sipped her tea and then spoke carefully in the atmosphere that she was about to return to the empire.

"Well... Your Majesty Lohan, may I ask you a favor?"

She dared to sit at a table as a maid, but she opened her mouth first. Besides, this was not the first time but the second time. Nevertheless, instead of pointing it out differently, he made a gesture that allowed her to speak, and Mielle, who was confident in it, opened her mouth with her eyes shining.

"I want to stay here, not go back to the empire."

"... Yes? Why?"

"Ah, there's a little more information I haven't told you yet."

It was dangerous to return to the empire now for she had fled her house that she was currently being held at, and the investigation about the hallucinogen had not been completed.

So it was better to sell a little more information about the Crown Prince and build up her position than to go back and get caught. The corners of Lohan's mouth went up at the words that she would continue to sell her country.

"Oh, yes, I am welcome. The more information about the empire, the better, but I need the permission from Lady Isis..."

"I should leave her, for my maid likes it."


Isis had no reason to refuse, and she was going to leave her anyway. Isis had no trouble leaving her as Mielle said that she would remain here by herself. If she didn't threaten with the letters, whether she survived or killed, it was Mielle's fault.

“Then it’s a decision, and I’ll look forward to your information.”

Lohan’s eyes were very sharp, but Mielle smiled brightly at the thought of living.

“The Marquis, why don’t you take the same carriage as me? I will explain it briefly, as you may not know the situation of the empire yet.”

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Editor Group: Liber Reverie

Vika suddenly spoke to the Marquis of Piast. The Marquis had not been interested in the situation of the empire, but he affirmed that he would do so because he realized that what he really wanted to say was something else in his expression.

Mielle's residence was thus decided, and Isis, Vika, and the Marquis of Piast headed for the empire with the soldiers disguised as commoners.

* * *

"I can't believe Mielle really escaped..."

'What are you going to do now?' Aria had told him it was absurd. Aria knew that Mielle was going to escape because she had heard that from Asher, but she had a laugh as Mielle was so foolish that she had escaped.

"I ordered him to give some advice, but the princess who prepared it is also foolish."

Aria had heard from Asher and had vacated the house's servants to make it easier for her to escape. The guards had been told by the top line, so they had let a slightly suspicious maid come in without checking the maid further.

She didn't need to ask for the source of the information.

Layers Vika, it must be him. As a key figure in the Aristocratic Party, he had made a great contribution to the acquisition of the casino by Viscount Vigue, and he was a spy planted by Asher in the Aristocratic Party.

She remembered that even Count Roscent had received some advice from him. He maintained their trust by constantly giving information and advice to the Aristocratic Party so that his identity could not be revealed.

In the past, Aria had not known it until she had died, but she had now seen Vika in Asher's group with her very own eyes. If she looked back at his movements a little, she could know it easily. As Vika was active within the Aristocratic Party, Asher also did not add any other explanation as he thought Aria would have understood it.

"Would it be better to follow her up and bring another charge for her escape? If she runs off to Croa and disappears, we might not be able to catch her."

Asher shook his head when she asked, and unlike her urgent expression, Asher looked relaxed and a slight smile showed that he had already set another trap.

"No, we don't have to because she can't run anywhere, and it would be better if she and the princess are to be charged with treason. If you intend to forgive her, you may as well pursue her immediately."

"Treason?"

'Is Isis, who will marry the King of Croa, preparing for treason?' Her eyes widened because of the unexpected information.

“Yes, the princess will do something very absurd soon, and it is the last thing we have worked for a long time, and I hope you will not be surprised.”

She thought it would be an amazing work if he asked her this much. ‘What the hell is that?’

When she asked him as she was curious, Asher said that it was a secret, and he had a very pleasant face because he was in front of the hill to conquer. It was also a playful face.

“... My God, are you still going to keep a secret from me?”

However, when Aria took it seriously and looked sad, he quickly changed his expression and said, “Oh, I didn’t mean to make you feel bad, but I’ll explain everything, and I hope you’ll relax.”

“I knew you would, and I want you to explain it.”

But Aria was the same as she was playing, so she also smiled softly. She erased her look of sadness in an instant. She still thought he was cute to not figure out who she was and to have a mixed sensation of joy and depression for her every expression.

“... I was deceived by you for a moment.”

Asher, who thought she was really sorry for him, was embarrassed for a moment, and then he smiled softly along with her.

“The princess will be back in the empire with the soldiers in secret, pretending to be civilians. A great number of soldiers will be scattered in the houses of the nobles of the Aristocratic Party and prepare for the day of the battle.”

At Asher's leisurely answer, Aria's complexion became pale. If he was telling the truth, it would be a great incident. It was not a parable but a rebellion.

"But there is another story here. There is a secret that I have an unexpected acquaintance with a key figure."

"... An unexpected acquaintance?"

"Yes, it's an unexpected acquaintance that the princess would never have imagined."

Asher's expression was almost confident. He was confident it was a fight that he would never lose.

The end of this fight seemed to be the defeat of the princess and the destruction of the Aristocratic Party.

* * *

As Asher said, Isis, who had left for the Kingdom of Croa, returned to the empire shortly after. Unlike information that she would marry the king of Croa, there was no rumor about it. It seemed that she had come back without accomplishing anything.

Aria heard that the princess had not achieved anything, and she laughed at the foolish Isis, who did not even know she was falling. The princess had persuaded all the nobles of the Aristocratic Party and pretended to do great things, but eventually, she did nothing.

"It's been a while, but Mielle hasn't come back. I thought she would be with the princess. I'm afraid something happened to her." Aria said in the quiet dining room and her words were clearly meant for Cain. It was a question whether he was glad because he let her go.

“ ... ”

Nevertheless, Cain quietly had his meal.

The Countess, who did not like it, replied in a scornful tone.

“I’m worried that if she keeps running like this, it will produce irreparable results later. It would be okay if she will never return in the empire for the rest of her life.”

Aria smiled unknowingly in the tone that her mother seemed not to worry at all, and Cain looked at her. If it was the past when she had not had anything yet, she would have endured a desperate laugh but not now. Aria had enough power and wealth to laugh at Cain.

It was the Countess who had contributed to this for she was smuggling the Count’s family’s money in secret. Cain was busy with the business on behalf of the Count.

Of course, it was done with the permission of the Count, who was incapable and was fully dependent on the Countess. It meant that neither of them had ever made a thing to be blamed.

Cain had no idea how much of his fortune he had left, but he was doing the business with all his might. However, all this was incurred by himself.

“... I’m busy, and I’ll get up first.”

He rose first, leaving a meal that he could not empty half of it as if he was uncomfortable and felt this place was not for him.

“Oh, my God, are you that busy?”

“... Yes.”

“I hope our father will recover as soon as possible. Is that right, mother?”

“I suppose so.”

Cain, who was a bit hesitant, disappeared like the wind as she reminded him of his and Mielle’s faults until the end.

‘Why did you make work for yourself? Did the business the Count had worked for decades seem so easy? It is so hard that I invest in it, but what can he do when he has graduated from the academy and became an adult?’

In addition, he would not be able to concentrate on his business, but he had to take care of the soldiers, who had begun to enter the empire one after another with Isis.

Sooner or later, a large army would be coming into the mansion of Count Roscent, and would Cain manage the soldiers who had the king of Croa on their backs?


“I see the acting Count.”

“Welcome, gentlemen.”

Soon after, dozens of men dressed as simple as ordinary commoners came to the mansion of Count Roscent. They took a courtesy to Cain, but it was Aria who they were wary of. It was because of the scandal with the Crown Prince. Perhaps they had been ordered by the higher-ups. They looked so gentle, and in many ways, they seemed to be aware of her in their manners and postures.

Sometimes they looked stupid as they were charmed with her beautiful appearance, but soon they realized what she was and were wary of her again and were sparing of themselves. However, the soldiers in the other mansions, who had arrived before them, demanded too much and did not listen to them, and the nobles were devoured by anxiety.

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Editor Group: Liber Reverie

How could the nobles tell them their complaints? They were great soldiers sent by the king of Croa, and they had to preserve their spirit until the day of the battle and make the cause successful. So everyone endured everything.

‘I cannot give preference to the family of Count Roscent.’

No, Aria hoped that if possible, they would be very annoying to the servants in the mansion and that all the resentment would be directed at Cain and Mielle. For that reason, Aria went first to the soldiers who had been in a quiet state for several days.

“All of you have a hard time.”

“Lady, Lady Aria... ?”

Suddenly, Aria appeared in the garden while they were resting, and they were surprised and took a courtesy. It was surprising that a noblewoman came to visit, especially Aria who was the Crown Prince’s lover. Also, she was the Investor A of the rumors.

They had not been instructed not to go on a rampage at the mansion of Count Roscent, but they wouldn’t dare do that in a mansion where Aria of brilliant modifiers was.

Aria, who read their innocent look, noticed that there was no one around her and told them. "I don't feel comfortable because you're uncomfortable."

The faces of the soldiers were embarrassed by her surprising talk.

'Why don't you understand it all at once?' Aria continued to talk, "I hope you have a comfortable stay in the mansion. Everything will be accounted for by my brother, the acting Count. He is very generous."

"Ah..."

"Of course, the owner of this mansion is not me and my mother, so I cannot take responsibility. I will leave this house as I reach adulthood. It's Cain who called you in the first place, so please don't mind me."

Several times she mentioned that Cain was responsible for what the soldiers would do, and then they opened their eyes as if they understood what Aria meant.

"I heard that the soldiers who stay in different mansions enjoy a banquet every night. What about you? The mansion of Count Roscent is full of alcohol and food enough to hold a banquet right away."

Aria smiled softly and recommended. The way she said that was also languid, but it was close to the command to do so. The soldiers, briefly charmed by her beautiful smile, began to wake up and burst into the demands they had endured.

How frustrating it must have been! They must have come to play, eat, and get drunk. There was nothing to block them as Aria's permission fell. They began to make more demanding and annoying demands than the soldiers in any mansion.

“Get more food! Meat! Bring meat!”

“Where is this drink from? It doesn’t taste good! Bring us the highest grade one!”

Since their aim was to devastate the wealth of the nobility, the soldiers demanded the most expensive food, clothing, and blankets. As they were the soldiers sent by the king of Croa, Cain suffered without saying that he didn’t like it.

Even if the Count was fine, he could cope with whatever would happen, but he did not have the knowledge that he was able to overpower the tough soldiers. There was no action, and shortly afterward, the lament of servants began. Every day the sad song continued.

Aria, who had brought it all, held a simple tea party in the garden for the servants in the meantime, and they began to confess as if they had waited.

“Hoo, it’s so hard to get new food every time. They eat a lot of food.”

“They said they were acquaintances of Cain, but I’m not sure. They don’t look like noblemen. The way they talk is also strange. Is it a mix of dialects?”

“Right. It’s a bit rough. It’s strange for three or four people to use one room. Well, some people sleep with a blanket on the floor.”

“Furthermore, they demand us thick and soft clean blankets every time, so I’m doing laundry every day and lost an inch off my waist.”

“I have swollen hands! They are freezing, and I can’t clench my fists...”

When the servant said her hand was swollen, Aria furrowed her forehead. She seemed to wash clothes from dawn to lunch even though the winter was approaching, and the days were cold. There were a lot of people, and it was inevitable.

“I feel very sorry for you. You look really sick as your hands are swollen.”

Her short words with all her heart reddened the eyes of the servants. Even though it was not so much comfort, they felt comforted by Aria’s sorrowful voice.

Besides, it was Cain who had brought hardship to them, but Aria was comforting them. So how could they not be impressed? Aria suggested a solution for the servants, who were about to cry.

“You don’t have to push yourself too much in doing laundry. Buy a new one every time they ask for a blanket.”

“Yes...? I am thankful to you, but there are too many... I don’t know how long they will stay in the mansion, but it will definitely cost too much.”

There was a terrible rumor that Cain did not manage the Count’s business properly and the Count’s family was going bankrupt, so they needed to save as much as possible. Many a little would make a mickle.

No, it wasn’t a little because the winter came and the price of the blanket was not cheap. If it was a cheap quilt, it would be okay, but they had to buy a high-quality quilt, and the number of soldiers was quite large. It was clear that a lot of money would continue to be spent. Not only the food cost, but also the clothing and entertainment was a big expense, and the wealth of the Count’s family was greatly damaged.

That was exactly what Asher wanted and what Aria was hoping for as well, so she gently grabbed the cold hands of a servant. "What is as important as your body and mind? And don't worry since the family of Count Roscent, which is the wealthiest in the empire, can't be swayed with such a penny. Rumor is just a rumor."

"Oh, Miss...!"

"How kind you are!"

"You can buy a lot of food and keep it. If it's bad and you have to throw it away, you can't help it. Order a lot at a time and ask them to deliver it to the mansion even if you pay extra."

"Well, can we really do that...?"

"Of course. I'll take responsibility if anything happens."

Aria made a gentle smile as they were touched. It was that faux ability that drove away the real owners of the mansion of Count Roscent and held the dominion of the mansion.

"If you're short on stuff, go to this store. It always seemed to bring a bunch of fresh stuff. If not, they'll get it and deliver it to the mansion."

Aria passed the address to the servants, which she had prepared in advance. It was one of her businesses. As it boasted high-quality ingredients, the price was also expensive.

As they bought groceries with the funds of the Count's family, the profits from this were distributed and returned to Aria. Those who did not know this were deeply impressed by Aria's great consideration and swore allegiance to her again.

After arriving in the empire, the Marquis of Piast had already visited a number of brothels to find a woman who his son longed for. It was not easy to find a person with a name and approximate appearance that was supposed to be an alias. If she were a commoner, it would be easy, but as she was a prostitute, it was not easy to follow her tracks.

In the wagon leaving the last brothel, the Marquis of Piast recalled the unexpected words that he had heard when they were headed to the empire. Those words were what he had heard from Vika.

“His Highness wanted to meet the Marquis of Piast, but he would eventually meet you this way.”

“... Where is His Highness?”

“The Crown Prince. The last time he visited Croa, he asked several times that he would like to visit your mansion as there was something he wanted to check.”

That reminded him of a man who had asked for a visit so much that the Marquis of Piast became tired. He had called himself the Crown Prince of the empire, but he remembered that he had gone out and did not meet him.

But he was really the Crown Prince! Come to think of it, there had been a time when the Crown Prince had visited Croa with Roscent Aria—his lover.



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Editor Group: Liber Reverie

However, it had been his mistake as he had come to meet at first without making an appointment. So the Marquis had lightly passed it over, and when he thought about it again, he felt that the Crown Prince of the empire would not come to see him in a simple matter, so he listened to Vika.

“His Highness said he wanted to confirm something.”

“What is it?”

“It’s about your son.”

“... my son?”

‘Does it mean Chloe?’ Even recently, Chloe had caused trouble and her wife had been lying down. When he remembered it and frowned, Vika continued to talk, clearing his throat.

“Yes. There is a lady in the empire that looks exactly like your son. I can’t guarantee that I can only confirm it with a portrait, but it’s very similar to the face painted on that portrait anyway.”

“...What do you mean?”

“You should check her face once, but His Highness said, “Didn’t his son have his descendant right in the empire?”

At the words, the Marquis of Piast frowned even more.

‘Chloe? Did he get his offspring in the empire? What a ridiculous nonsense! Why can’t I hand my title to him?’ Thinking again, even though he knew it sounded ridiculous, he couldn’t help but recall the name that Vika had mentioned. It was because nothing more could be done for his son.

‘I didn’t say Chloe was my son in the first place... What does the Crown Prince know?’

He had been surprised at a moment and exchanged a few words, but in the end, it had sounded ridiculous and he had finished the conversation. ‘How did he know about Chloe and claim that he had a child?’ Nevertheless, his mouth tickled because he wanted to turn the carriage.

He kept thinking about Vika’s words that there was nothing to lose with his confirmation. If he only confirmed as he said, it was not a loss. He didn’t think it was possible, but if the lady was Chloe’s child, as Vika had said, the woman his son had missed so much would be there with the lady. And if it was true, she would be his granddaughter.

‘Is it better to turn the wagon too?’

Looking out the window, the carriage was already approaching his quarters. He felt the speed slowing. Of course, if it stopped, it was reversible, but he was impatient.

‘Isn’t that the king Lohan told everything to the Crown Prince?’

It was possible. For convenience, he had told Lohan about his private matter. Nothing was as insignificant as to doubt his lord, but it wasn't Lohan, but the previous King of Croa, who had promised to keep the secrets of Chloe and Violet. Therefore, he was not in a position to regret if Lohan had spoken the secret. Of course, he was not so easy to uncover his secret, but it was one of the possibilities.

"We're here."

While so worried about his complex feelings, the carriage stopped and the voice of the driver was heard from the outside. The driver had been employed directly in the empire, but now it was a somewhat familiar voice.

He was hired for a short period of time without revealing his identity, but the driver was a competent person who responded intimately without compromising his status and force in the Marquis of Piast. Even if it wasn't the report of the driver, the Marquis could see that he had arrived in a view out of the window, but could not get off.

"... We're here."

When he had no answer and no signs, the driver again announced the arrival. After sitting for a while, he decided that it would be a good idea to check it.

"I'm sorry, but there's a place to go."

"Yes. Please speak."

As the driver replied casually, the Marquis of Piast hesitated a bit and then told the destination.

"Go to the mansion of Count Layers."

"Yes, sir.

The Marquis's instruction made a busy footstep, and the carriage soon set off for a new destination.

* * *

"Mr. Vika. Mr. Piast came to see you. What should I do?"

"Piast...?"

'The Marquis of Piast?' He was just waiting for him, so Vika was pleased and ordered his servant to let him come in. He had informed the Crown Prince that the Marquis had secretly visited the empire, and he had been urged to confirm the truth. The Crown Prince had had an urgent face.

'I confirmed it through the portrait, but I want to make sure through blood. If it turns out to be true, I wonder how those who have ignored her will change.'

Vika, who recalled the words of the Crown Prince, was also curious about the changes of others. Even though she had great ability, they still neglected her as they mentioned about her origin.

It wasn't just that he was fond of Aria and wanted them to regret and change their attitude. He simply wanted to consume the dual attitude of the nobility as entertainment. The daughter of a vulgar prostitute was found out that she was the blood of the Marquis family. 'Is there anything more interesting than this?' Soon afterward, Vika greeted the Marquis with a very happy face, who was coming into his mansion.

"I haven't seen you in a long time, Marquis Piast. Did you find her?"

Knowing that the Marquis came to him because he couldn't find her, Vika archly greeted the Marquis. It was similar to a scorn that he should have listened to him seriously from the beginning. It was the Marquis that was a little uncomfortable, but he answered without saying a complaint as he himself was sorry.

"No, unfortunately, I didn't find her. So I came to you. Wasn't the conversation we talked about quite interesting?"

Even after looking for her in the capital for a long time, he could not find the shadow of the woman Chloe had been looking for, and he hurried to the point. Vika also wanted to make a satisfactory report to the Crown Prince, so he no longer found fault with his remark and answered straight away.

"Would you like to go check her face?"

"If possible, right now."

"Good. It's easy. It's a matter of saying that I come to see the Count who is lying down."

And meanwhile, it meant checking her face. It was the least cumbersome and easy way to check her face. he didn't know if the Marquis had a good idea, but the Marquis's face brightened a little.

"We'd better leave right now. Before the sun goes down."

"I will."

Both Vika and the Marquis were in a hurry, so they didn't delay and went straight to the mansion of Count Roscent. There was nothing good to move separately, so the Marquis returned his carriage to the lodge and accompanied him in Vika's carriage.

Not too far, but the road seemed to be far away. As a result, the Marquis was nervous and his lips were dry, and he could not say anything. So quietly and quickly, they reached the mansion of Count Roscent, and Cain, busy with his business, had not yet returned home. The mansion was rather noisy because of the soldiers from Croa, and the Countess welcomed them in an elegant manner.

"What brings you here?"

"I was anxious about the Count. I'm sorry for the late time."

"No. By the way, who is this?"

"Oh, he is my acquaintance from far away. We visited together because he had been favored by the Count in the past.

"Oh, really? My husband seems to have piled virtue in many ways. Nice to meet you."

The Countess greeted the Marquis of Piast with the bright smile in a courtesy.

"He may not remember me because it was very gracious for a moment, but I've been worried and visit. Forgive my rudeness."

"It's not rude. He can't move freely, so he just waits for someone to visit."

The Marquis glanced over the face of the Countess in detail, as she answered.

Blonde hair, green eyes, and a beauty. She was consistent with the appearance his son had always had in his mouth. It had been difficult for Chloe to identify exactly because he had no talent for painting, but the rumor was that she was a former prostitute. It was quite possible that she was the woman Chloe had been looking for.

“He is in the room. Unfortunately, his legs don’t move at all, so he can’t come out. How poor he is.”

To explain her husband’s unfortunate condition, the Countess, who had spoken out a rather unscrupulous sentiment as if talking about someone else’s, led Vika and the Marquis to the Count’s room. There, Vika and the Marquis, who saw the state of the Count in bed, swallowed a shocked breath.

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Editor Group: Liber Reverie

“... Count. long time no see.”

“Yes. Long time no see, Vika. How are you?”

“Of course.”

Vika couldn't ask the Count how he was, and he finished with a smile, the Count nodded to the Marquis beside him and asked him who he was.

“Ah, he was a little helped by Count the other day.”

“It's Pia. I've been grateful to you the other day.”

“I see. I'm sorry I can't remember you.”

“No. You can do that. There were a lot of rumors that you were doing great grace to the poor.”

“Haha. Was it? I would be very happy if it was.”

The look of the Count who replied was so bright. For he could no longer serve as active, but simply mentioning the glory of the past could have made him a great favor, despite having never met.

This allowed Vika and the Marquis to have a long conversation with the Count. They delayed the time as long as possible and waited for Aria, but she didn't come out of her room.

"Oh, time is already here. It's already dinner time."

And the Countess, bored by their visit, gave a secret order to leave to the Marquis and Vika. But the Count did not want them to leave, so he offered them dinner so that they could stay at the mansion for a little more.

"Have you had dinner?"

"No, not yet."

Vika bit the bait, wondering if Aria would show up at the dining room, and the Countess gave an uncomfortable look and ordered servants to prepare dinner for the two of them. It was not difficult to add a meal for two people because the ingredients were well prepared.

So Vika and the Marquis could sit in the dining room with the Countess and waited with a throbbing heart for Aria to come down. Soon after, the figure they were waiting for appeared in the dining room.

"We had a guest?"

The Marquis, who turned his head in a clear, transparent voice, had to be hardened as if time had stopped, and Vika's eyes sparkled and he smiled as he was watching it.

"You are Mr. Vika, right?"

"It's been a long time, Lady Aria."

"... yes, what brings you here?"

"I came to ask after the health of the Count."

As Vika replied, and Aria's face was mistrustful, knowing that Vika was not a pure-minded man, and that he was not in a position to worry about the Count. Vika, who spoke vaguely with a laugh and pretended to be the owner of the house, talked to her to take a seat.

"The food will cool, When it cools, it will taste bad."

'... OK, I've never seen this gentleman before.'

This time Aria's eyes turned to the Marquis. The familiar clear green eyes... If the strangers saw her, they might think her eyes resembled the Countess, but not to the Marquis, and those clear, beautiful eyes were certainly close to the eyes of Chloe. It was hard to notice because the colors were different, but it certainly was. So were the pupils, and the overall appearance was the same as Chloe's.

Someone, who knew their faces of Chloe and her, would never have thought of other people, and if she cut her hair short, she would be Chloe. So when the Marquis was captivated and could not answer as she asked, Vika replied on her behalf,

"Ah, he had an acquaintance with the Count a little, and he came to say hello and then he joined the dinner."

“Is that so? He is rather a quiet person.”

As she said so, her eyes were very sharp, glancing the Marquis, because she did not believe Vika's words.

She seemed to think he had a secret design, and even the look on her face looked like Chloe's.

He had not come to look for Aria, but to find her mother, and when he met her, he did not give any interest to the Countess. The Marquis's eyes were only on Aria.

“... you are very rude.”

And even though Aria pointed that out, he was moved rather than offended or apologetic. How couldn't he be impressed by his own flesh and blood that he met in a foreign country?

“You are beautiful, and he can't help it.”

Vika made a hasty excuse for the Marquis, who could not even say a word of apology; but the Marquis's rude gaze was never taken away. If she had felt the carnal desire in his eyes, she might have splashed water, but he was shocked and surprised, not by the lust for the opposite sex, and Aria began to eat as if she had given up.

The Marquis seemed to have a lot of questions to ask her, but he could not speak to her until she had finished her meal.

* * *

“Mr. Asterope! Mr. Asterope!”

Asher answered, frowning at Vika, who had come to him frivolously this late night.

“Why?”

“You don’t have to answer that as if you’re being so annoying!”

“Why?”

There were some things that bothered him to answer, but it was a bigger reason why he was nervous about not being able to meet Aria because he was busy in the last work.

“Could you see who I brought?”

“Who is that?”

Asher spoke with a surprised face.

“Did Lady Aria visit me this late at night?”

It seemed a little less in the past, but lately, everything concluded to Aria and Vika answered with a little irritation.

“No, it’s not. Do you say so, knowing how busy Lady Aria is? He is not as good as Lady Aria, but he is the one who you have waited for.”

Before he could get angry at the convulsive words of Vika, someone opened the door to the office and came in, even though he had not yet allowed it. He was a stranger with white hair and close to an old man.

“Who is it?”

"I see Your Highness, my name is Piast from Croa."

Asher's eyes widened at the Marquis's introduction.

If he was the Marquis of Piast, he was the man who he had been waiting for, as much as Aria. And this was how he came to...

"I guess you've finished confirming."

As he said it, his eyes were shining, because he could see the results without listening.

"Your Highness... how and what did you know?"

As the Marquis of Piast asked directly, Asher recommended him to move to another place.

"I think we should move over, and that's not the story of standing up and talking."

"... yes."

Vika called a servant quickly and ordered him to bring tea out. The servant had been waiting since he had appeared near the office, and two cups of tea were ready, and Asher and the Marquis of Piast moved to the lounge, which was prepared in the next room of the office.

"I was not the first to know. It was Frey."

"If it was Frey...?"

‘Frey, Violet’s eldest daughter?’ Although she had been separated since Chloe and Violet had been deported, it was possible for her to recognize Aria at a glance because she had stayed with Chloe for a long time.

“Yes, Franz Frey, you know her well.”

“... how is she?”

“She seems to be well. It wouldn’t be too bad to go and see her.”

‘How could I who had taken all of her family away from her?’ Of course, it was the imperial royal family that had taken Violet first, but as a result, Frey had been left alone in the empire, so he could not go to see her proudly. And she was not his own blood.

“... thank you.” So, he didn’t look grateful but rather wanted to talk about something else.

Asher, who noticed this, did not waste time, but immediately came to the point. “Anyway, that’s why I investigated about Chloe. I remembered seeing his face when I was a little child. The more I investigated, the more overlapping it was with Lady Aria, and I could not help but doubt it.”

“That’s why you came to me, to confirm the truth.”


“Yes. I couldn’t think of anyone else, except you who took the mother and son who had been deported from the empire. And if a powerful man couldn’t help, there would be no way I couldn’t have obtained any information out of it.”

“...”

The reasoning was quite plausible, and this had been almost broken but connected. It was bad news that the Countess had been married, but it was much better than the past when he did not even know where she was. He could even find the presence of Aria. Asher asked the Marquis, who drank tea with a trembling hand with joy.

“Did Chloe not know about Aria?”

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Editor Group: Liber Reverie

“Yes, he doesn’t know anything about her because the secret of his birth was revealed and deported as soon as he met a woman named Apple.”

“... Apple?”

“It was the name of the Countess Roscent, and it’s a common alias to a prostitute.”

It was a strange sense, but in the empire where flowers symbolized the aristocratic family, it was common to use things other than flowers as an alias. Apple was a fruit that was easy to see, so half a dozen of them were using it, and that was why it was not easy to find her whereabouts.

“It was only one meeting, but he still misses her.”

“Why didn’t you just let people ask around? No matter how deported they were, it was possible because the Marquis had taken them.”

“When Chloe was deported, he was insane. He couldn’t talk for a while. He knew that he wasn’t his father who he’s ever believed in, but he couldn’t have been alright. Even now... No, I sent people to find her later, but I couldn’t find her.”

"So you've come here yourself, because Chloe's in bad condition."

"... yes, you are right."

But he had met Aria and Asher who noticed that his purpose had changed. Anyone could know that if they saw his expression of joy. He was purely touched by the presence of Aria and his encounter with her.

"Now it's time to go back. I hope both Chloe and Violet are happy."

"...Are you thinking about just going back?"

"Just? What do you mean?"

"The Countess married the Count and would no longer be able to be with Chloe, and Lady Aria would not follow the Marquis because she had settled in the empire. You just checked that she was your descent, and I ask you if you'll just go back."

That was the most desirable result for Asher. If Aria would follow the Marquis and go to Croa, it would be harder to meet her. As the distance was too far, there was a limit to use his ability. There was a maxim, "Out of sight, out of mind."

When he was worried about it and asked, the Marquis who was a little worried, replied, "No. I just don't want to go back. Apple, no, the Countess... It is not easy to accompany me because she is married, but I think it will be different if it is Lady Aria. I have heard of her only by rumors, but it will be easier to stay in Croa than the empire where she has been treated contemptuously so far. I also want to support everything she hasn't enjoyed."

Perhaps it would be better for Aria.

Most people would think of it as the Marquis. No matter how she settled in the empire, it would be better to go to the Kingdom of Croa because it was mostly done in writing.

“Well. Will it be as easy as it sounds?”

But even if all were in favor, Asher could not agree. Rumors of Aria’s relationship with Asher as a lover were widespread and the Marquis was already aware of it, so he didn’t question his negative response.

“Furthermore, the heart of Lady Aria will be important. You wouldn’t be able to take her even if you want to take her.”

“... I’m aware of that. So I should ask for her opinion.”

“Her opinion?”

When there was nothing at all, her blood had not showed up at all, but if he suddenly appeared and said that he came to take her after she was successful, who would be happy to accept it? In the past, Aria, who had only been a daughter of a prostitute, would have been very happy, but now they did not know her mind.

And somewhere in his mind, there was also confidence that Aria would not leave him. It was clear that Aria would choose himself rather than the Marquis who suddenly appeared.

And if not, he would just close the border to Croa. It would not be bad to make a law that minors could not go abroad.

He knew it was a ridiculous idea, but he didn't want to let go of Aria. 'Isn't the power existed for this use?' Regardless of how Aria responded, Asher, who thought of a way to prevent the Marquis from taking her, said to him in a lightened look.

"Good. Then you'd better ask her directly, as the Marquis said."

"Directly...? Do you mean now?"

The Marquis asked with a surprised face whether the memory of the first encounter was so bad.

"If you are uncomfortable, I can ask her for it."

If he asked himself, she was likely not to go. As she did not know the circumstances well, Asher would write a written promise so that she could not leave forever.

"It may be a good idea to carry the relationship slowly and ask later, but it is better for her to know this current state. I would be grateful if Your Highness would do that."

'You don't know it's a trap.'

The corners of Asher's mouth rose with a satisfactory answer.

The next day, Asher, who was in a hurry, visited the mansion of Count Roscent in the morning without an appointment. He was with the Marquis, disguised with a wig.

In the appearance of a brilliant carriage, soldiers taking a morning walk gathered around with a surprised face. Shortly afterward, they all lowered their heads in the shape of a tulip-shaped seal drawn on the wagon.

Aria came to the entrance of the mansion late in the morning and opened her eyes and asked, "What are you doing here so early in the morning?"

"What purpose is there other than to come to see you?"

"Me? But it's too early..."

'Besides, why did you come to ride the bright carriage? Did you want to brag about going to see me in the whole capital again? You can come straight to my room.' Aria shook her head and asked if he would like to have breakfast with her.

"Why don't you have breakfast with me outside?"

"Outside?"

"Only two of us."

'Not a quiet dinner, but breakfast?' It was a strange invitation, but her heart was moved, so Aria smiled and nodded.

"I have to change my clothes."

"I'll wait."

It would take some time because she had to trim her hair, but Aria's mind was urgent, at the answer that he didn't care. Aria disappeared back into the mansion so quickly and began to dress up.

"Miss! How about this dress?"

"This necklace is good for you!"

"Do you want to spray gold on your hair?"

"Oh my God, I have to shine your nails!"

It was not only Aria that was busy. The maids were also busy with the sudden visit of the Crown Prince, and the Countess, who was about to eat breakfast, also helped her daughter dress up in a fuss.

"Would I bring my jewels for you? This new diamond is very beautiful."

In the end, Aria had to wave her hand at the seemingly excessive appearance.

"Please don't forget that it is now morning. I'm going to have breakfast, not a party."

Otherwise, she was gorgeous, but she was so beautiful that it was hard to look at her because it was snowy when she was dressed with all their care. 'Is there someone who decorates so gorgeously in the morning?' Even though she was a noble, she had to classify time and place. Then Aria smiled happily as they took off the things that had been decorated.

"... If you come out with such a beautiful dress, I can't get you off the carriage."

"I don't know what to do with so much compliment."

In the end, all the ornaments were collected and she did not decorate herself so splendidly, but it could not prevent his mouth from drawing a good line.

The wagon carrying Aria immediately left the mansion of the Count and ran the city. The people who faced the bright carriage from the morning could not hide their surprised faces for a while, but after realizing that this had happened several times, they shook their heads, saying that the Crown Prince fell in love.

“By the way, why did you come? Did you really want to have breakfast together?”

“Of course.”

Apart from asking questions, it was true that he wanted to have breakfast with her, so Asher replied casually,

“Really?”

“Yes. I haven’t seen you for a while and couldn’t sleep at night. So I visited early this morning.”

This was not a lie either. When he had closed his eyes, he had almost moved to the space as Aria had come to his mind. Whether she liked his answer, doubt disappeared from the face of Aria, and bright laughter blossomed.

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As it was so beautiful, Asher was almost speechless. In fact, he had visited for another reason, but he also smiled thinking that it had been good to come.

“Well, this is a pretty wild question. How would you feel if your biological father suddenly appeared to you and wanted to take you?”

Asher’s voice flowed over the wall of the wagon and into the driver’s seat. It was because they picked a wagon with a thin wall. The Marquis swallowed his saliva and waited for Aria’s answer, and Aria cocked her head, and asked back, “I don’t know why you’re asking such a question without saying anything.”

“It wasn’t long before you would become an adult, and I suddenly thought about it. What if your biological father appears and you disappear after a while? What if you run away saying you don’t like me? Should I block the border?”

As if acting, he put his hand on his chin and replied with a worried face, and Aria burst into small laughs.

“It’s that kind of anxiety. I have dreamed of you running away many times.”

Aria, who had achieved many things by herself, was able to live proudly without marrying the Crown Prince. He might be comfortable if she had no abilities and had to lean on him. But that wouldn't happen, and Asher did not want it, so he gave up a long time ago.

"I do not know. If he shows up now, I will doubt his true intentions."

"What do you mean?"

"When I was in a difficult time, he didn't even cast a shadow, but does it mean that he appears as I am self-reliant enough to live alone? It doesn't look good."

And in the past, her biological father, who hadn't appeared in the middle of the twenty and died, suddenly appeared now. She really had to doubt his true heart.

"I see. What if he didn't show up for some reason and didn't mind if there was nothing in you?"

Suddenly, his explanation changed quite a bit, and Aria, who rolled her eyes for a while, shook her head again.

"It depends, but... Well, I will refuse."

"... why?"

"Because you'd hate it."

'How can I be positive if you tell me that you've been thinking about it first?'

In addition, it was Asher who would live with her in the future, not her biological father who had no contact at all. And it was also Asher who had always comforted her. Now when he said that he was her father and would take her, she would not be impressed.

The carriage was once rattled by her answer, which gave no room. It wasn't too much, but it was clearly a shake that obviously represented the Marquis's mind.

* * *

"Unfortunately, she did not take the wishes of the Marquis."

Asher's expression was so bright as he said so. Even though it was not the face of the one who argued the misfortune of others, the Marquis of Piast agreed with it.

"... yes. Thank you for your help."

After hearing Aria's intentions, the Marquis of Piast would no longer say he would take her. In a satisfactory result, Asher asked him what he would do in the future,

"What are you going to do in the future? You missed both the Countess and Aria."

"For now... I'll talk to the Countess. No matter how much Lady Aria hates us, the blood relation is a different matter."

"That's a good idea, and it's better than suddenly confusing Lady Aria."

"Yes, I think it would be better to hear it from the Countess than from me."

He could not take her to the Kingdom of Croa anyway, so it was better to take time to reveal it slowly than to confess that she was the descendant of the Marquis family. Either way, she would be shocked, but it would be better to hear from her mother who had been with her than her strange grandfather.

"I'm sorry, but can you help me one more time?"

"If it's simple... What's it for?"

"Could you make a seat with the Countess for me? It's hard to visit her again because I visited the mansion of the Count family as a different person..."

"It's not that hard. OK."

Asher gave consent to the request of the Marquis. He got to know what he had hoped for, and there was nothing he couldn't help. Besides, there was another reason why Asher accepted the request of the Marquis. He intended to be present at the conversation between the Countess and the Marquis.

The meeting with the Countess was done without delay; when he wrote a letter to her that there was a problem to the villa she had purchased, she appeared at the appointed place with a desperate expression.

"... Your Highness!"

"I haven't seen you in a long time, madam, please sit down."

Apparently, it was a letter from the government office, and why was the Crown Prince here?

Come to think of it for a while, and it was strange that the meeting place was a cafe in the first place. If there was a problem, they would have told her to come to the office.

It was a room that was independent of other places, but it was not a suitable place to deal with public affairs. The Countess, who had confirmed that the man who had visited the house the previous time with the Crown Prince, sat on the other side of them, her eyes shaking.

"I ordered tea at my will, but I don't know if you'll like it."

"It's, it's OK. Thank you."

The Countess took a sip of the fragrant jasmine tea with her trembling hands and calmed down her heart. She wondered what he was going to say, and why he had been fooling the letter. As she waited for Asher to speak, worried, and it was the Marquis of Piast who unexpectedly spoke,

"I actually called you."

"... why?"

"I want to ask you something."

'Why did he call her in, who had been in a small grace by the Count?' She couldn't form any idea of what it was, and she swallowed her saliva and waited for an answer. However, the words from his mouth were unexpected.

"Do you know Chloe?"

"... who?"

“Chloe. He said he saw you only once, seventeen years ago; I’m talking about my son, who looks like Lady Aria.”

At his words, the Countess frowned and rolled her eyes, and she seemed to be worried because she could not think of who it was. How could she think of a man who she had met only once more than ten years ago?

And seventeen years ago... it was the time when she had been working as a prostitute. A man she’d met when she didn’t want to think about...

“... Don’t tell me, are you talking about the man?”

Nevertheless, he had an unforgettable appearance, and she opened her eyes wide as if she had come to think of his face, and asked back. She had forgotten him, but she could remember that he looked like Aria.

“... why do you ask that? I just met him a long time ago once.”

She had met him as a guest. She would not even remember him if he was not like Aria. Her heart had been moved by his sweet talk and he had said that he was attracted to her at first sight with his beautiful appearance that she could not believe he was a man.

He had never given her his name or his status, but she had thought that such a sweet man could make her happy. But Chloe had not come since his single visit, and it had frozen the heart of the Countess, who had expected for a moment.

‘Why did he ask about such a man now?’ She thought of it and looked displeased again, and suddenly she had a strange feeling. She had thought of the man she had met more than a decade ago through her daughter, and she was also suspicious of the timing. She had had Aria shortly after she’d met Chloe.

The Countess, embarrassed, trembled her hands, unable to hide her face, and the tea-water, which had spilled over her mouth before she could bring it to her mouth, soaked her beautiful dress a little.

She needed time to think and organize, and the Marquis of Piast and Asher watched her and waited quietly. And the Countess, who had been in a long-suffering mood, looked at the Marquis with a sharp, thoughtful expression as if she had sorted out.

“So, do you come to threaten me with a pretext of my daughter? Do you need money?”

Otherwise, the man who had visited to ask after his health with the slight grace of the Count would not come to her like this.

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THE VILLAINESS TURNS THE HOURGLASS NOVEL (HTTPS://READLIGHTNOVELS.NET/THE-VILLAINESS-TURNS-THE-HOURGLASS.HTML)

Chapter 199 (<https://readlightnovels.net/the-villainess-turns-the-hourglass/chapter-199.html>)

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Editor Group: Liber Reverie

It was strange that the Crown Prince was beside him, but as she could only think of it, she revealed her hostility, and then Asher, who was still, intervened in the conversation.

“Madame, please be a little angry. This is the Marquis of Piast of the Kingdom of Croa. Sorry for the late introduction.”

“... Who?”

When Asher introduced him again as the Marquis of Piast, the Countess did not move. It was as if she had stopped breathing.

“The man you met, Chloe, is my eldest son, and I think you have guessed to some extent, but I was wondering if the blood had been linked to Lady Aria. I don’t think she looks like him unless it does.”

“So... Aria succeeds the blood of the Marquis family?”

“I think so.”

“...”

The Countess's eyes wandered in disbelief, and she seemed to be embarrassed at the thought of how to take it for it was not bad, but it was something she had never thought of.

There had been several lower-class noblemen who had visited her, and she had thought that it might be possible, but she had never thought that he was a man of the Marquis family.

"My son was in trouble, and he couldn't come to see you, but... he still misses you. He'll be delighted to hear that he has a daughter."

"... Wait, wait, give me a moment to think. It's so sudden, and I don't know what to say. Besides, it's not certain, but you just came because she looked like..." The Countess put down her teacup because of what the Marquis said.

His beautiful appearance was uncommon, but it was difficult to confirm that because of her previous job.

"Don't worry about that, ma'am, I have a way to check it out."

At his words, the Countess and the Marquis looked at Asher at the same time.

'How could he confirm if the name was not written on the blood?' Then the Marquis opened his eyes wide as if he had realized something.

"... The pond of the Imperial Castle."

"Yes, if Lady Aria was the granddaughter of Violet, who drank the holy water, she could touch the pond of the Imperial Castle."

She didn't know what they were talking about, but the Countess nodded at the words that there was a way to check.

"... Then, if you're sure, tell me again. As for me, I'll have to sort things out by then."

The Marquis asked in an urgent voice as she finished the conversation. "If you don't mind, may we send you a letter?"

"... Will you send it to me or Aria?"

"I will send it to you... No, maybe Chloe..."

Chloe might want to get in touch with her, who he had been finding for a long time. He might even visit the empire by forging his identity.

The Countess rose, answering with a chilling voice. "Well, it would be a misunderstanding if another man writes a letter to a woman who has already been married, and if you're done, I'll excuse you first."

Yet the Marquis had a little hope for her unsure refusal; and the Marquis, who had the means to contact and some good news, left the empire without hesitation.

On the other hand, when he returned to the office, Asher was thinking, touching the ring in his hand.

* * *

At the end of the day, before going to bed, Aria screamed a little at Asher who suddenly appeared. It was fortunate that the maids were not there anymore, but she complained that he almost showed a great scene.

“Why didn’t you talk and come to me?”

“I’m sorry.”

Asher’s apologetic gaze passed the ring in Aria’s hand and headed for the box of the hourglass box in the cabinet. As he thought that the blood of violet flowed to Aria, he had a doubt for the box that she had always carried.

“Mr. Asher?”

Asher, who could not take his eyes out of the box, turned to her at her call. Then all of a sudden he told her why he visited her room.

“Why don’t we take a night walk?”

“... But it’s cold, right?”

As Aria’s birthday was near now, it was not good to take a walk this late at night. Asher smiled softly at her question and put his coat over her shoulders.

“The pond of the Imperial Castle is not very cold.”

“Yeah...? The pond of the Imperial Castle...?”

He suddenly talked about the story of the pond of the Imperial Castle, and she was embarrassed and was about to ask something when he grabbed her hand and used his power. Aria was lost in the picturesque landscape, which she had only heard in stories, without being surprised by the sudden change of view.

"It's the pond of the Imperial Castle. This is a place I often visit because of its mystical atmosphere and soothing landscape."

"... That's, that's awesome."

She didn't know why it looked like that. Maybe it was because it was late at night, but it was as if the stars in the sky were melting in a small pond. The flowers around it were also mysterious. As Asher said, the cold of winter could not be felt there.

Because of that, her look of surprise and embarrassment vanished, but she was carried away by the ecstatic scene. Asher quietly watched her for a while and led her inside.

"Well, my feet are on the grass..."

She thought it would be trampled, but strangely, the grass and flowers stepped on by Aria's feet did not bend or die, and they rose again. At the peculiar sight, she checked again the grass and flowers she stepped on, but they were still there. It was a strange place indeed.

"The water in this pond is called the holy water. It's because there's a legend that the pond was formed after the emperor of the empire died here."

"Ah, so there was such a legend..."

Aria's eyes were dull as she answered, and the stars in the pond gleamed in her eyes. She was already completely charmed by the pond.

Asher asked her what she really wanted.

"Would you like to touch it?"

“The pond? Can I touch it?”

“Yes, there is a myth that it brings happiness.”

Even though Asher’s permission had been granted, she hesitated, but she lost her heart at the words that it would bring happiness. So she bent over and reached out to touch the pond’s water. She felt a cold sensation on her fingertips.

“It’s cold, I think only this pond is affected by winter.”

“... I see.”

As he watched this, his eyes were shining, and Aria, who touched the water in the pond, straightened herself and came near him.

“I touched the water. Will happiness come now?”

Aria’s face was a little flushed. She seemed to like Asher’s sudden visit, and their walk in the middle of the night. Asher glanced down, saying yes. The ring on her finger was shining softly.

“Mr. Asher?”

Aria called Asher in a curious voice because he was not making eye contact. In time, as the light faded from the ring, Asher, who turned his eyes from her hand, met her eyes.

He was now convinced after seeing Aria touched the holy water. It was not a mistake that the ring had changed its color the other day.

"Is there something in my hand...?" Aria, who was aware that his gaze had been in her hand, asked, lowering her gaze.

She remembered he had mentioned the color of the ring the last time, and as she touched the ring, he answered as if it was nothing.

"No, I thought it was a butterfly, and I think it was an illusion."

"Butterfly? This winter night?"

'Is it because of this excuse that he looked at the butterfly in front of her?' She answered that she could not believe it.

Nevertheless, she seemed to be caught that she was hiding something. Asher stared at Aria, who was in disbelief and was lost in thought. On the other hand, he wanted to ask why the color of the ring had changed in the past, and what she was hiding, unlike how the color of the ring changed when she touched the holy water earlier.

But if he asked it here now, he had to confess that the reason why he brought her to the pond of the Imperial Castle was because he wanted to confirm her identity. He could not ask her honestly because he had lied to her, so he could bring her to the pond.

It would be best if Aria would tell what she was hiding, but since she did not seem to have any intention of doing so, it was better to wait for the right moment and ask it naturally.

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THE VILLAINESS TURNS THE HOURGLASS NOVEL (HTTPS://READLIGHTNOVELS.NET/THE-VILLAINESS-TURNS-THE-HOURGLASS.HTML)

Chapter 200 (<https://readlightnovels.net/the-villainess-turns-the-hourglass/chapter-200.html>)

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Editor Group: Liber Reverie

Anyway, Aria would not go to anyone but himself, and even if she left him, he would not let her go, so he had plenty of chances to ask. So he kept his mind deep in his heart, wanting to know the truth.

“You’d better go home because it’s late, and you might catch a cold.”

He wrapped up her shoulders covered by his coat and changed the subject, pretending to be casual. In no time, his look was changed and smiled with a soft smile that he had always shown to her.

“... Yes.”

In response, Aria looked suspicious, but she was naturally beside him, convinced that there would be a reason. She was also good at hiding her facial expression, and he didn’t know what she was thinking, but maybe she thought it was nothing.

She then took a step forward and immediately her vision turned to her room. When he cleared his doubt, he felt a sense of regret for not wanting to part with her. As he looked down at her face, thinking of the conversation that would take a moment, he said, as if something came up.

"It will all be settled soon."

"... Oh, I see. I thought it would be the time after a while, but already... and would Mielle show up?"

Aria said, paying great attention.

"Maybe so, because they think they'll win."

"I hope she'll be back as soon as possible," said Aria, and her doubts about Asher had disappeared. She was delighted as if she were a kid playing a new prank.

'What is so fun? Is it because Mielle will be ruined? Or is it because the Count's family will be ruined? Or both?'

If someone knew Aria's cruel temper with a sulky smile that seemed to have a secret design, he would have been busy calming his surprised heart, but she was only a beautiful woman to Asher.

"I'm afraid I'll go now. I'll see you on your birthday."

"That long?"

Since it wasn't that late, he took the hand of Aria, who was surprised and asked him a question. He asked Aria with a lovely smile,

"Will you visit the Imperial Castle?"

"That's..."

As she hesitated because she was also busy, he smiled a little.

“If you allow me, I will secretly visit you like this if I have the time. If I can’t, I will make sure to send you a letter.”

“... I see.”

It was really late, so he left regret behind and kissed Aria on the back of her hand and said goodbye then disappeared.

Soon after he disappeared, Aria, who had had a soft girl’s face, looked at her hand with a cold face.

“The ring...”

The ring that had taken Asher’s attention! It had been a royal ring for generations, and he had explained that when Asher used his power, its color changed. After a while, it returned to its original state, but it reminded her of the ring that glowed blue, immediately after using its power.

The last time she had listened to it with no attention, but he had said that the color had changed when he had seen her ring. She had forgotten, but she remembered that he had also looked at her hand with strange eyes.

‘...No way!’

Because of the crazy idea, her face hardened. She also wondered that if she used the hourglass, the ring would shine like Asher’s.

‘No, it can’t be.’

Last time, she had used the hourglass but not today. She only remembered taking a walk near the pond of the Imperial Castle. Nevertheless, she took out the hourglass she had left in the cabinet just in case, and even though she thought it was impossible, she wanted to check it.

Aria, who had been weighing the time with her pocket watch for a moment, turned the hourglass slowly. She put the speeding hourglass on the table and lowered her trembling eyes to check the ring on her hand.

“...!”

The ring unbelievably emitted a blue light like when Asher had used his power.

‘What the hell is this...?’

‘Why... Why is the ring glowing? Was it because I used the hourglass? Was it because I’m using a power that was the same as Asher’s even though I’m not a part of the royal family?’ The ring was glowing blue, and she thought that it was the only answer.

‘... Is that why he mentioned the color of the ring right after I used the hourglass? Did he know what was happening all along...?’

When her thoughts reached that far, she lost her energy. There was a chance that Asher knew about her ability. She had thought she would have to say it someday, but she hadn’t wanted Asher to notice it first.

‘What should I do? Should I tell it to him?’

She was worried but got no answer. Most of all, she wondered if he knew it and if it might shine in another way. Furthermore, she was drowsy because she had used the hourglass.

‘... I’ll ask him about the ring again.’

The question would not be answered if she grumbled alone, and as Asher had confessed his secret, the time for her to confess her secret was coming near.

* * *

“Brother, I think this birthday party should be big.”

Aria, who had ignored him, treating him like someone she didn’t know, suddenly spoke to him, and Cain was stiff. She had talked through the servants when she had something to say, but what was the reason?

“... What?”

He didn’t understand what she was saying, and he asked again what she had just told him, and Aria added a little smile because he said it in a slightly dumb tone.

“I told you I’d have to make my birthday party a little bigger because not only my friends but also your acquaintances who live in the mansion would attend.”

In her words mentioning the soldiers, Cain, who understood what she meant, cleared his throat and pretended to be casual.

“That makes sense.”

It was funny that he could not refuse her request even though it was obvious that he was having problems with money.

“Can I tell the butler that? I will say that you gave me permission.”

“... Okay, do it.”

Aria had not given him a glance, and he seemed satisfied that she had acknowledged him as the head of Count Roscent family and that she asked his permission. Perhaps he thought it was worth it to push his father down the stairs and serve as the acting Count even if he did not know that it was a ruined family.

Cain didn't know, but the Countess had already taken almost all of the Count's family's money away, and that the Count's family had no money to spend on an expensive birthday party. No, the Count's family had no money to even hold a birthday party.

The Count, who did not know that his family finances were in danger, had allowed the Countess, who had melted his heart, to use his property under the pretext of taking care of himself.

Of course, she had only got his permission but had not reported to anyone. That was because she had used the property but had not stated that she had used it.

‘So there's no record, so you're stupidly aware that the Count's family still has a lot of money left.’

All this was because Cain had not informed the Count that he was not doing his business properly, nor had he asked for advice. If the Count was in good shape, he might have known what was going on, but he was in a state of instability, and he could not make a proper judgment.

There were many things that were happening, and those were eating up the family of Count Roscent, and it was in a very bad situation to fall straight down if someone touched it lightly with his fingers.

“Thank you, brother.”

“Well, it’s nothing, and it’s an occasion that is only held once a year, so it’s not bad to make the most splendid one in the entire empire.”

As soon as the words fell, Aria, who gave Cain a bright smile, immediately instructed the butler to make the party grander.

“Yes? Bigger than we originally planned?”

“Yes, there are a lot of people in the house beside the guests I would invite.”

The butler looked worried, but as it was the instruction of the wise Aria, he said he would do so.

“I’ll do my best not to disappoint you.”

He really did his best to prepare the party. Since it was winter, the garden was minimally decorated, but the mansion was fully decorated. Asher, who she had been expecting a visit in the meantime, did not appear and sent a letter to inform her of his regards.

‘He must know my power, too.’

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